THE CROSS IN JAPAN

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THE CROSS IN JAPAN

THE CROSS IN JAPAN

A HISTORY OF THE MISSIONS OF ST. FRANCIS XAVIER AND THE EARLY JESUITS

BY

CECILIA MARY CADDELL

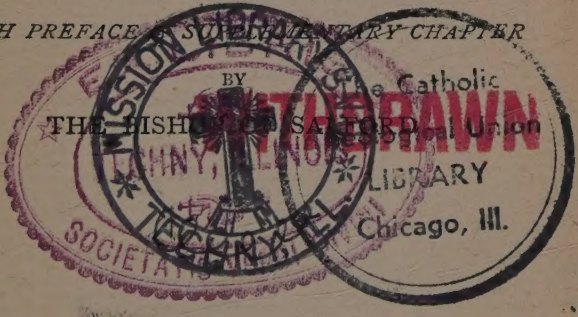
AUTHOR OF "THE JESUIT MISSIONS IN PARAGUAY"

A NEW EDITION

WITH PREFACE AND SUPPLEMENTARY CHAPTER

BY

THE BISHOP OF SALFORD



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28 ORCHARD STREET, LONDON, W.

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THE EDITOR'S PREFACE.

CECILIA CADDELL'S touching story of the heroism of the Martyrs of Japan was for a generation among the household treasures of the English-speaking Catholics of the middle of the last century. When it first appeared, Japan was still in her feudal period; still a closed land to Europeans; still the fierce persecutor of the Christian name. The Japan of to-day is not a hundred years, but a thousand years, ahead of the Japan of Miss Caddell's time. Twelve years after the publication of her "Missions in Japan," the present Emperor, Mutsuhito, brought about at one stroke that amazing revolution (1868), unprecedented in history, which has produced the modern Japan that is to-day the cynosure of the whole world. The extraordinary interest naturally felt in all that relates to Japan and the Japanese people at the present moment, has made it seem opportune to republish these true stories of Christian Japanese heroism in past centuries. In doing so, it has not appeared feasible or desirable to recast the story or introduce alterations in the text. At the same time, one or two preliminary admonitions are necessary to the reader. In the first place, accustomed as we are to Japanese names of places and persons in our daily press, many of those to be found in the following pages will seem strange and unusual. The fact is that the early Jesuit missionaries, on whose accounts Miss Caddell's history is based, spelled according to the Portuguese method, besides preserving certain pronunciations which are now more or less

archaic. Thus, as the Portuguese *x* represents our sound of *sh*, the town known to us as Kagoshima appears in these records as "Cangoxima"; "the Xoguno" represents the title known in history as "the Shogun," of which more anon. So, again, Figo and Firando are nowadays called Higo and Hirado; Nangasaki is familiar to us as Nagasaki; whilst "Miako" (*i.e.* "capital") is the city now known as Kyoto, &c.

But much more important is the nomenclature of the Japanese rulers, concerning which Westerns have had correct notions only since the Revolution of 1868.

There is constant reference in the writings of the old missionaries to the "King" or "Emperor" of Japan, and these titles are given to the great persecutors of the Christians—Taikosama, Nobunaga, and others. As a matter of fact the use of these titles in our ecclesiastical histories is entirely erroneous. To explain how the early missionaries fell into error, it will be necessary to refer to a much earlier period of Japanese history. The series of the Emperors (or "Mikados") of Japan goes back in an unbroken line from our own day to the founder of the dynasty, Jimmu, who appears to have reigned from 660 to 585 B.C. But at the close of the twelfth century of our era the all-powerful minister Yoritomo succeeded in establishing the curious system of government known as the *Shogunate*, which endured till so recent a date as 1868. This system resembles nothing so much as that of the "mayors of the palace" under the later Merovingian kings. The "Shogun" * was Commander-in-Chief of the forces, and also Vicegerent of the Empire. And though for long periods he was actually the *de facto* ruler, still during the whole eight centuries of the Shogunate this potentate always scrupulously observed the outward show of reverence for and absolute dependence upon the Emperor, whose humble servant he professed to be, and whose commission he

* The name was long known in Europe under the Chinese form "Tycoon."

always received for the performance of his duties. Yet the early Jesuit missionaries seem to be quite oblivious of the existence of the Mikados, or Emperors, whose names never appear in the acts of the ancient Church of Japan.

The famous Taiko-Sama (literally "Lord Taiko")—called in the present work "Teigo-Sama"—was in reality the Prime Minister, Commander-in-Chief, and Vicegerent, known in Japanese history as Hideyoshi.

For further particulars, and for a consecutive though brief *résumé* of the history of the Japanese Church up to our own time, I can refer my readers to my little pamphlet, *The Catholic Church in Japan*, published by the Catholic Truth Society.

The future of the Japanese people is a subject of the most intense interest to the world at large, for with its destinies are closely associated those of both Asia and Europe. Japan's marvellous successes during the past few years in the arts of war as well as of peace point her out as one of the decisive factors of the fates of the twentieth century. Above all for Christianity will the influence of Japan be great for good or evil. We must not forget that the Japanese were the favourite race of St. Francis Xavier. "The nation with which we have had to do here," he declares in one of his letters from Kagoshima, "surpasses in goodness any of the nations lately discovered. I really think that among barbarous nations there can be none that has more natural goodness than the Japanese."

Again, a letter to St. Ignatius Loyola betrays the depth of the affection which attached Francis to this people, for he exclaims therein, "No words can express all that I owe to the Japanese." And how wonderful in the light of subsequent history is the prophecy contained in another part of this letter, where he writes: "As far as I know, the Japanese nation is the single and only nation of them all which seems likely to preserve unshaken and for ever the profession of Christian holiness if once it embrace it."

It may, then, be sincerely hoped that the present re-issue of Miss Caddell's narrative of the early Japanese missions and persecutions may not only prove edifying and interesting to Catholic readers, but may stimulate them to fervent prayers for the religious welfare of this extraordinarily gifted people, whose conversion was the dearest wish of the great Apostle of the Indies, and whose innumerable Martyrs, canonised or yet to be canonised, we cannot doubt are at this moment united with the Queen of Martyrs in pleading for their country before the Throne.

✠ LOUIS CHARLES,
Bishop of Salford.

St. Bede's College,
8*th May* 1904.

THE AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

THE history of the introduction of Christianity in Japan, and of the terrible persecution by which it was utterly extirpated in that island, is at once a melancholy and a glorious episode in the annals of the Church. In the Japanese we behold the most highly-gifted of the Asiatic races of modern times receiving the Gospel with a joy and a fervour which remind us of primitive ages, when thousands in one single day would run at the divine call to fill the apostolic net, and when the multitude of the faithful, serving God with one heart and one soul, resembled rather the chosen few who in later days have left the crowd to follow the higher path of evangelical perfection, than the mass of ordinary believers. But if the Japanese excite our admiration in their willing reception of gospel-truth, and their fervour in obeying its precepts and counsels, no less, or rather still more exalted are the feelings with which we must regard the spirit in which they met the fiery trial which came upon them. Never in the times of the old pagan persecutions was a more glorious spectacle exhibited of men, women, and children rushing to claim the martyr's palm, and seeking sufferings and torments as others seek honours and pleasures.

Still the history has its melancholy page, and all the more dark and gloomy for the glory which had preceded. In this fair and promising land the Church ceased to be, as utterly as if the Cross had never been planted on her shores; nay, a far sadder case was

hers; for not pagan ignorance alone, but bitter prejudice and hatred, long closed her gates against the good tidings of salvation.

It is strange indeed to see a flourishing Church thus completely extirpated from the soil where it had blossomed and borne such rich and golden fruit. True it is, that Churches once abundantly blessed have been turned into desolation, as in the case of various cities and even whole regions of Asia Minor; but there corruption, and degeneracy, and lukewarmness, and the spirit of heresy and schism, had preceded the storm; and when the day of trial came, and the blast of persecution was let loose, the tree fell, for it was already rotten at the core. It excites in us, therefore, more sorrow than wonder, when we behold no longer those Churches of the East, once burning lights, which the beloved disciple addressed in accents of solemn warning. Their candlestick is removed. God threatened; and He has made good His word. But far otherwise was the case of Japan. She expired in the fervour of her first love; and in this, perhaps solitary instance, we seem to look in vain for the fulfilment of the proverb, that the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church.*

* Miss Caddell wrote before the wonderful events of 1865 and 1868.—Ed.

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THE CROSS IN JAPAN.

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CHAPTER I.

Saint Francis Xavier is sought at Malacca by one of the natives of the Islands of Japan ; two Jesuit Fathers go to Kangoxima ; their reception ; go on to Miako, the capital ; but presently return to Amanguchi. The work of conversion begins. F. Francis is invited to Bongo ; success with the king, and in controversy with bonzes ; is recalled to India. Other Missionaries sent in his place. Two bonzes converted in Bongo. Remarkable constancy of children. The first martyr of the Japanese Church, a female slave in Firando. The Missionaries re-assemble in the kingdom of Bongo.

WONDERFUL are the ways of the Almighty, and inscrutable as wonderful ! The conversion of China, for which the Apostle of the Indies had so long and so ardently sighed, was denied to his prayers ; while that of Japan, of which apparently he had never even dreamed, was offered to him unasked. China was the object of all his wishes and aspirations,—the promised land of his spiritual ambition. It was in his dreams by night and his thoughts by day,—the subject alike of his penance and his prayers ; when a young Japanese, tormented by remorse of conscience for a crime committed years ago, and forgotten pro-

bably by everybody but himself, arrived at Malacca, where the Saint then was, and throwing himself at his feet, besought of him that peace and pardon which his native bonzes had been unable to bestow. The great heart of Francis exulted at the prospect of winning another empire to the banner of his Divine Lord; while his vivid faith saw in the sinner who had thus sought him from afar a direct ambassador from Heaven, which had doubtless pursued this youth with the fear of retribution, not for his sake alone, but also to effect the conversion of the idolatrous nation represented in his person.

Frequent conversation with Anger,—for such was the name of the Japanese,—only confirmed him in this first opinion. The deep feeling, the tender piety, and above all, the earnest pleadings of this poor heathen in favour of his countrymen, that they also might be enlightened by the gift of faith, were arguments which the zeal of Francis could not resist: but he had to contend with innumerable obstacles before he could put his project into execution; and it was not until two years afterwards, that, on the Feast of the Assumption (1549), he and his chosen companion, Father Cosmas de Torres, landed at Kangoxima, the birthplace of Anger, who, under his new name of Paul de St. Foi, accompanied the fathers as their guide and interpreter to the nations of Japan.

By a singular arrangement of Divine Providence, stress of weather had compelled the captain to put in at this port,—the only one in the whole kingdom where they could have hoped for a favourable reception; and here their first success was more than enough to confirm their most sanguine expectations. Not many hours elapsed before the Japanese convert was sent for to the palace, and questioned concerning the strangers whom he had not only brought to the city, but lodged in his own house. Paul was in the first fervour of his conversion, and he answered by a vivid explanation of

the mysteries of the Christian faith, winding up his account of the Incarnation by exhibiting a picture of the Blessed Mother and her Divine Child, which he had brought with him from the Indies. Both the earnest manner of the convert and the miracles which he announced, had already touched them with awe and wonder; but when they looked upon this picture, which was to them as the visible illustration of his mysterious words, such an untold reverence filled their hearts, that all bowed down before it,—king and queen and courtly heathens involuntarily doing it homage on their knees.

Then they naturally desired to know more of the strange bonzes, from whom he had heard of these wonders; and the best part of the following night was spent by Francis at the palace, explaining the articles of the faith. Both the king and queen listened to him with delight; they were never weary of expressing their astonishment at the charity which had brought him so far for their salvation; and the permission he craved for the free preaching of the Gospel was readily granted. Paul had already converted his mother, wife, and children; but after these, the first person baptised by Francis was a poor man, who, under the name of Bernard, soon became illustrious by his virtues; as if God wished to confound the pride and mammon-worship of the Japanese, by taking His first-fruits from that very class which they most hated and despised. Other converts speedily began to flock to the standard of the cross; but the bonzes had already taken the alarm. A religion which preached poverty as its noblest possession, and chastity as the highest virtue of the human heart, would soon, if suffered to succeed, have ruined their credit and retrenched their revenues; so they raised such a storm at court against it, that Francis was fain to shake the dust from off his feet, and to seek a less ungrateful soil wherein to sow the seed of the Divine Word.

Leaving the little handful of Christians already made under the guidance of Paul, he and Father Torres,

with his poor convert Bernard, took the way to Firando. His heart was yearning towards Miako, the capital of the whole empire, and the resort of all the great and learned of the nation. This, he thought, would be the best point from whence to diffuse the Gospel throughout the various cities and kingdoms subject to its control. Hither therefore he directed his steps, in the depth of winter, without guide or money, ill-clad, and with only a little parched rice, which the faithful Bernard carried in the wide sleeve of his oriental garment, for his means of subsistence on the road.

Mountains were scaled, rivers forded, and forests traversed, with the indomitable resolution which was so especially the characteristic of the Saint. Shelter was every where denied them by the inhospitable Japanese; and they often lost their way amid the pathless wilds through which they were compelled to wander. Once, when they were completely entangled in a wood, they were overtaken by a horseman, who agreed to conduct them through it, on condition that Francis should carry the box which contained his luggage. Such an offer suited too well the humility of the Saint to be rejected, and he joyfully followed his guide, who trotted on through thorn and thicket at a rapid pace, regardless of, or perhaps even rejoicing in, the sufferings of his victim. The livelong day was spent in this unnatural exertion; and when towards evening his companions came up to the place where the horseman had finally left the Father, they found him lying on the ground, his legs so swollen and his feet so cruelly cut and bruised, that they were obliged to rest for several days before they could continue their journey.

Miako was gained at last, with its stately streets regularly crossing each other at right angles, its six hundred thousand inhabitants, and its five hundred temples dedicated to the worship of the idols;—a great and populous city, seated in a spacious plain, sheltered and half-surrounded by an amphitheatre of hills. The capital of a mighty empire, it was the centre alike of

religion, of learning, and of commerce, in Japan. The palace of the Dairi formed a kind of academy for the cultivation of science and the fine arts; and the city itself was famed for its manufactures of silk and porcelain, for its highly-refined copper, well-tempered steel, and its works in gold and silver; while every coin in circulation throughout the Archipelago was struck at the imperial mintage of Miako. To win such a city to the empire of Jesus Christ would have been truly an achievement worthy of Francis; and yet his first reception in it might hardly have seemed to hold out any hope of reward for the perils he had encountered in its behalf. Rebuffs, however, for the sake of Christ, are not merely precious for His love's sake in the eyes of His saints, but are likewise coveted by them as an earnest of future success in every enterprise undertaken for His glory; and of these Francis drank freely in the city of the Dairi. On the road hither he had been twice nearly stoned to death by the idolaters, against whose superstitions he had inveighed; but here he was met by that cold contempt, which is harder to bear than open violence to the loving heart. His poverty precluded him from an audience either with the Dairi or the Kumbo; neither rich nor poor would listen to his sermons; and it was all in vain that, with indefatigable perseverance, he wandered up and down the city, and through the towns and villages beyond its suburbs, preaching and catechising from morning until night, and crying out, in the excess of his tenderness and love, "Deos, Deos, Deos!"* until the very children learned the word, and used to hoot it after him in derision as he passed.

Fourteen days were thus spent at Miako; on the fifteenth he turned his back upon the haughty city,

* Francis always expressed himself by the Portuguese word *Deos*; fearing that if he employed any of those in common use among the Japanese, they might confound the idea of the Divinity with that of their Kami and Chadotschi, the idols to which they were generally applied.

and passed on to Amanguchi, a town not far distant, and taking its name from the kingdom over which it presided. Mistress of some of the most productive silver mines then known in the world, and with the reputation of being the richest and most dissolute city in Japan, the Saint had vainly preached to its inhabitants on his way to Miako; yet now, on his return, he had better success. The Portuguese merchants (who, to their honour be it recorded, were ever the most generous and zealous promoters of every effort to christianise Japan,) procured him an audience with the king; and he, whether from feelings of admiration, or in order to put his guest's disinterestedness to the test, offered the Saint a large sum of money. Francis refused it; and on being asked what the king could offer that would be more acceptable to him, "Nothing," he answered, "except leave to preach the true God in your dominions."

Charmed with an integrity to which he could find no parallel among the native bonzes, the king not only granted this request, but likewise gave a place of residence to himself and his companions, with a piece of land for the erection of a church. Still the work of conversion did not progress. Courtly favour might give leave for the sowing of the seed, it could not force it to take root and blossom; and though men flocked to Francis by night and day, and though they filled the house in which he lived, and followed him through the streets, and crowded round him and his companions whenever they preached in public, yet it was evident that they were prompted more by curiosity than devotion. The fathers were continually harassed by questions that were proposed solely with a view to affront or perplex them, and not accompanied by any desire for more serious instruction; until at length that change of heart, which neither the smiles of the king nor the eloquence of Xavier had been able to accomplish, was effected by the grace of God rewarding an act of heroic humility on the part of one of the companions of the latter, a brother of the Society of Jesus, of the name

of Fernandez. This holy man was preaching in one of the most frequented parts of the city, when a person in the crowd spat derisively in his face. The spectators were indignant at this wanton brutality; but Fernandez himself merely took out his handkerchief, wiped his face, and then, without betraying the slightest emotion, proceeded with his sermon. It was but the forbearance of a moment; yet it proved to be the germ from whence numberless conversions were afterwards to spring. A nobleman, who happened to be present, sought Francis on the spot, declaring that a religion which inspired such patience under injury could only have been taught by heaven. Many others followed his example; and in the course of the ensuing year no fewer than three thousand of the natives were instructed and received baptism at the hands of the Saint.

By this time, the king of Bongo, who was destined hereafter to play so considerable a part in the history of the Church of Japan, had heard of the stranger bonze whom Portuguese ships had brought to his shores; and being anxious to know something more accurately about the wonderful religion he had come so far to announce, sent him a pressing invitation to the capital of his kingdom. Nothing could have been more acceptable to the zeal of Francis, ever on fire to carry farther and farther still the standard of his Lord: he left Father Cosmas de Torres to supply his place at Amanguchi, took a tender leave of the new Christians there, and set out for Funay, the capital of Bongo, carrying a marble altar-stone, a chalice, and other articles for the celebration of Mass, in a knapsack on his shoulders. The Portuguese merchants who resided in the city received him with royal honours; and as soon as the king heard the guns which they fired to salute him, he despatched a second letter of invitation, of which the following is a portion:

"Father bonze of Chinchicogin (the Japanese word for Portugal), may your happy arrival in my estate be as pleasing to your God as are the praises of

his Saints. God hath not made me worthy to command you; so I only earnestly request you to come before the rising of the sun. Meantime, prostrate before your God, whom I acknowledge for the God of all gods, I beg Him to make known to the haughty of the world how much your poor and holy life is pleasing to Him, to the end that the children of the flesh may no longer be deceived by the false promises of the earth. Send me news of your health, that joy may give me a good night's repose, until the cocks awaken me with the welcome news of your visit."

This curious epistle, which, with all its eastern strangeness of phraseology and flattery, contains so much of Christian truth, that it suggests itself to us as an inspiration from above, was carried by a prince of the blood royal, with thirty lords in his train.

They were conducted on board the ship where Francis was now staying; and when they beheld the homage which every one paid to him, they could not resist the conclusion, "that the God of the Portuguese must needs be great indeed, since this bonze, poor though he was, could yet command the respect of the wealthiest of his nation." After these envoys had performed their commission and departed, the Portuguese besought Francis to allow of their accompanying him with due honours to the palace; urging the necessity both of showing this proud people the reverence Christians ever felt for their priests, and also of confounding the bonzes, who had every where described him as a miserable wretch, clothed in rags, and covered with vermin. Xavier was most unwilling to part even with the externals of his beloved poverty, but at length humbly yielded his own opinions to their very strong desire; and the next morning they set out in grand procession from the ship, the boat which brought them being lined with the fairest China tapestry, and a band of music playing until they reached the shore. They were met at the landing by a deputation from the king; but Francis refused the litter which had been provided for

his accommodation, and they all went on foot to the palace; the captain of the ship walking bare-headed before him, and five Portuguese following. One of these bore a book (the catechism) in a white satin bag; another, a fair picture (as the old chronicler calls it) of our Lady, wrapt up in red damask; a third, the priest's slippers; a fourth, his cane; and the last a magnificent parasol, such as in Japan is used only for persons of the highest distinction.

In this order they proceeded through the city; and being met at the palace-gates by the captain of the king's guard at the head of five hundred men, were conducted into a large hall, filled with Japanese nobles in their richest dresses. Here a little child, who had been appointed to the office, being led forward by a venerable old man, saluted Francis, and bade him welcome to the kingdom; after which he led him to another apartment, to receive a similar compliment from the young sons of the nobility; and from thence, by a terrace made beautiful and fragrant by the bloom of its orange-trees, to a gallery hung with tapestry and curious paintings, where the highest nobles of the land were in waiting to receive him. Two steps more, and he was in the presence of the king. Xavier instantly prostrated; but, to the astonishment of all spectators, the king himself bowed down before him, and then raising him up, made him sit beside him. Before the interview was concluded, Francis was invited to dine with his majesty; and strange indeed it must have been, in a country where etiquette is so jealously preserved, to see this poor stranger seated at the king's own table, while the native nobles and the wealthier Portuguese remained in the royal presence, according to custom, humbly on their knees.

From that day he became a frequent visitor at the palace; for the king, admiring the virtues which he preached while he practised, and practised while he preached, delighted in his presence and holy conversation. Here, however, as at Kangoxima, the bonzes

were speedily roused to a sense of the danger threatening their institutions. At first they tried to awaken the superstitious terrors of the king; but finding that he only laughed at their prognostications of evil, they shut up all the temples of the gods, and excited the people to rise against the Portuguese, whom they taught them to consider as the cause of this necessary precaution. The latter, alarmed for their personal safety, took refuge on board their ship; but Francis positively refused to follow their example. Nothing could induce this faithful shepherd to abandon the flock which he had so recently gathered into the fold of his Lord; so the ship put off to sea without him; but the first panic was no sooner over than they were seized with remorse at having left him in such imminent peril, and the captain returned alone to seek him on shore. There, indeed, he found him, in a poor hut, surrounded by all his faithful Christians, who were well content to die, provided they might do so in the very arms as it were of their spiritual father; but to all the well-meant exhortations of the Portuguese, Xavier only answered, "God forbid I should abandon the flock which He has given to my care. You hesitate to leave me, thinking yourself bound to save your passengers at all risks; and shall I be less careful for souls redeemed by the precious blood of Jesus Christ? or what reproaches may I not expect from Him, if I forsake them at a moment when they are in danger of losing their lives, and yet worse, their faith? You say you love me, and I believe you; yet you almost seem to contradict your words when you try to rob me of the martyr's crown, which I have come from the farthest ends of the earth to seek." The Father lifted his eyes to heaven, and pronounced these words with so much earnestness and devotion, that the other could not refrain from tears. He returned to the ship, and told his crew they might do as they liked, but for his own part, he would live and die with the man of God. There was not a man among them but instantly sub-

scribed to this resolution. The ship put back into harbour; but almost before they could reach the land, the king had taken such vigorous measures with the rioters, that peace and order were soon restored.

Foiled in this attempt, the bonzes next had recourse to other measures; they petitioned the king for a public disputation with the stranger on their respective religions. It was granted; and after a controversy of five days, the king declared from his throne, with the unanimous consent of the whole assembly, that the religion of the stranger bonzes was more conformable to truth, reason, and good sense, than that of their opponents. These last retired, uttering a thousand imprecations against the prince, who, on his part, utterly regardless of their indignation, conducted Xavier, with every demonstration of respect and esteem, and amid the plaudits of the multitude, back to his abode.

The Portuguese were now ready to sail; and Francis, who had received letters requiring his presence in the Indies, repaired to the palace to take leave of the king. He had often bravely and openly reproved that monarch for the wickedness of his private life, and now he could not part from him for ever without renewing his protest, and warning him of the danger he incurred by persisting in his vices. He spoke with the fervent energy of a saint, and with the courage which only a saintly spirit would have dared to use in a country where life and death were at the bidding of the monarch, and a word too much or too little might have set the seal of martyrdom on his doom. He bade him remember, that if he were a king, he was likewise a man; that if his subjects were accountable to him, he also was accountable to God, who would judge him with as much, or yet more severity than the meanest of mankind. He asked him what answer he could give at the last day, when he should be reminded that Christ had sent His ministers to him from the farthest ends of the earth with overtures of peace, and that he had rejected and scorned the proposition; and, in conclu-

sion, he besought him, with words of fire flowing from the very inmost recesses of his burning heart, to listen to the voice of his Creator speaking through his lips; and instead of stifling the good sentiments with which he had been inspired, to change his life at once, and become a Christian; adding, that he should die content if he could but hear on his return to the Indies that the king of Bongo had been the first crowned head in Japan upon which the baptismal waters of salvation had been poured. The king was much moved by this discourse, which Francis pronounced with great majesty and devotion, ending it by kissing his majesty's hand, and humbly thanking him for all his favours.

On the 20th March, 1551, he sailed from Bongo, to which he never returned; but he was not on that account unmindful of the dear converts he had left behind him, and almost the last act of his life was the despatching a fresh supply of missionaries, with Father Balthazar Gago at their head, to the assistance of those already labouring in Japan. They arrived about eight months after his own departure, and were received by the king with the same kindness he had always shown to Xavier himself; but for the present they made no long stay in his dominions, proceeding at once to Amanguchi, where they were anxious to confer with Father Torres on the affairs of their mission. One can conceive the joy which these good fathers felt on their first meeting in the distant land to which they had come, for no other end than the salvation of souls and the glory of God, and with no other earthly hope than to see both the one and the other promoted by their labours.

The festival of Christmas being close at hand, they resolved to celebrate it with all possible pomp and gladness, adorning the chapel as well as they could, and inviting all their converts to assist at the midnight Mass, which was sung by Father Torres. The new Christians were charmed with this most lovely feast, the commemoration of God's tenderest gift of love to

man; and the night was spent in deep devotion; while on the following day they were all invited to dine with the fathers, in token of the peace and charity which reigned among them. The college was thronged on the occasion; and, contrary to all the usages of Japan, the rich and noble not only mixed indiscriminately with their poorer brethren in the faith, but entering into the true spirit of the festival, chose to honour the poverty in which Christ was born by waiting on them at the banquet.

These Christmas festivities being concluded, the fathers separated for their several missions, leaving Father Torres still at Amanguchi, which had been assigned to his superintendence; but not long after their departure, one of the civil wars by which Japan is so frequently convulsed broke out in that city: the streets ran with the blood of the contending factions; and the converts, fearful for the life of their pastor, besought him to withdraw. For more than a month he resisted their entreaties; yet he could not be unconscious that while missionaries were so few in number, the life of each one in particular was of inestimable value for the success of their undertaking; so at last he consented to retire, on condition of being recalled the instant that peace should be re-established in the kingdom. That night was spent in hearing the confessions of these fervent converts; and the next morning all, men, women, and children, accompanied him several leagues out of the city, receiving his blessing in tears of gratitude and sorrow before he took his final departure for Bongo.

It should be mentioned, however, that, previous to these events, he had had the happiness of converting two of the bonzes most renowned for learning and wisdom in Japan. They had long been in the habit of attending his public instructions, and had already conceived an earnest admiration for the religion which he preached, when one day hearing him mention St. Paul, they asked some questions which induced him to give them a slight sketch of the conversion and labours of

the Apostle. Charmed with the account, and no longer able to conceal his conviction, the most celebrated of the two bonzes, instantly turning round to the audience, exclaimed, "Behold, O Japanese! I also am a Christian! and as I have hitherto imitated a Paul by my opposition to Jesus, so will I follow him henceforth by preaching to the heathens. And you, my friend," he added, turning to his companion, "come with me; and since together we have disseminated error, now together let us teach the truth." Even as he was speaking, the grace from on high which had been poured on his own heart filled to overflowing the breast of his companion. Together they knelt before Father Torres, imploring baptism, and together they received it in sight of that great multitude; one being called Paul, and the other Barnabas, in memory of the incident which had thus led to their publicly declaring themselves Christians.

From that moment it became the dearest object of their devotion to emulate the zeal and labours of their namesakes; more especially he who had received the name of Paul sought to copy in himself the life of the Apostle: he fasted most rigorously, lay on the bare ground with a stone for his pillow, rose to pray at midnight, and at break of day went out into the villages to preach. In this occupation he possessed an advantage even over the Jesuit fathers who directed his labours; for he not only preached the faith as eloquently as themselves, but having been a bonze, he could likewise, without fear of contradiction, lay bare the impositions of his former associates. It was probably for this reason that he was sent with Father Balthazar, in the year 1557, to preach before the king of Firando; and among the thousands they converted during this mission was a noble lord, a relative of that monarch, whom the father baptised by the name of Anthony. His wife and son followed his example; and at a later period all three distinguished themselves by their courage and constancy in maintaining the faith. For the pre-

sent they employed themselves with diligent zeal in its propagation. Anthony was governor of two islands near Firando, where the missionaries prosecuted their labours with such happy results, that in a short time the entire population was converted, and three churches, which were put in the charge of the most fervent of the converts, were erected for their use. To these voluntary sacristans was also assigned the religious teaching of the children, who, under their care, soon became as pious and well instructed as their elders. Nothing, indeed, is more wonderful in the history of the Church of Japan than the courage and devotion every where displayed even by the youngest of its children. In the times of persecution we shall frequently find them smiling amid torments which, unsupported by Divine grace, the bravest of men would have been unequal to endure. Of them it may be truly said, that they were indeed prevented by the grace of God, receiving the faith as readily as they kept it steadily, and being often beforehand with the missionaries themselves in their desire for instruction. During this very mission of Firando, a young child came to seek baptism of Father Villela (who had been sent in the place of the bonze Paul); it was promised him on condition of his learning a portion of the Christian doctrine or Catechism. "But, father," he answered, smiling, "I know it already." Upon examination this was found to be the case; nor would he leave the spot until the father (judging that God alone could have breathed such earnestness into the heart of a child) had granted his request. No sooner had the baptismal waters touched his brow than the boy seemed changed from an almost infant into an Apostle, preaching the faith with such successful zeal in his own home, that only a few days afterwards he brought his whole family in triumph to be baptised like himself.

Unfortunately the labours incurred at Firando proved too much for the strength of the converted Paul (Paul the bonze, as he was usually called); and feeling his last end approaching, with the consent of his superiors,

he retraced his steps to Bongo, that he might die in the arms of Father Torres, his first instructor and spiritual father in the faith. The good old man received him with tears of tenderness and compassion; and having administered to him all the last rites of the Church, he had the consolation of seeing him die in sentiments of most fervent devotion, the sweet names of Jesus and Mary lingering on his lips up to the very last moment of his existence.

His departure from Firando was soon followed by that of the fathers who had been his companions on that mission. Father Balthazar went to preach at Facata; and a commotion against the professors of the Christian faith soon afterwards induced the king, notwithstanding the remonstrances of Prince Anthony, to command the departure of Father Villela likewise. He obeyed, exhorting the converts to patience and forbearance. But his submission by no means diminished the persecution; for no sooner was it known that he had left the city, than the bonzes rushed to the churches, and encouraged by the favour or indifference of the king, pulled down the altars, burnt the crosses, tore the pictures into a thousand pieces, and did all in their power either to provoke the Christians to revenge, or to bring them back once more to the worship of their idols. Their efforts were all in vain; not a single convert yielded to the temptation, or forgot the lessons of constancy, peace, and forgiveness which had been inculcated by the fathers; and thus, by their heroic firmness, they won for Firando the honour of giving the first martyr to the Church of Japan. A cross had been erected on a hill outside the city; and there, since the spoliation of their churches, they had been in the habit of meeting for their public devotions. A Christian slave who frequented these assemblies was threatened by her master with death, if she persevered in the practice. She modestly answered, "that a good Christian feared not death; but that while she would ever be careful of her duty to her earthly master, she could not,

therefore, forget that which was owing to her God." The next day she went out as usual, and he awaited her return with a drawn sword in his hand. The generous Christian at once saw and accepted her doom, and kneeling quietly before him, he cut off her head at a single blow. The Christians buried her with great solemnity; and far from being terrified by her fate, they were never weary of thanking God for the constancy with which His servant had suffered, and of encouraging one another to follow her example.

Father Balthazar and his companions very narrowly escaped a similar fate at Facata. The bonzes drove them with contumely from the city; but before they could get clear of the country they fell into the hands of some heathens, who robbed them of all they possessed, stripping them even of the clothes which they wore, and debating in their very presence as to the propriety of putting them to death. Finally, they were shut up in a miserable cave, where they were left without food or light, until, by the help of some Christians, they succeeded in escaping to the kingdom of Bongo. There they were received in triumph and rejoicing, the inhabitants of the capital going forth to meet them, with wine and fruit for their refreshment, and thanks, deep and fervent, to Almighty God for the protection which, in the hour of their utmost need, He had so visibly accorded to His servants.

Troubles or persecutions had now reunited in Bongo the very same fathers who, only six years before, had met at Amanguchi with such a goodly prospect of success before them; but however deeply they might feel this untoward change in their affairs, they had far too much of the true missionary spirit in their bosoms to lose either courage or perseverance. They were driven back, but not defeated; delayed, but not disheartened; and while waiting until a wider field should be again opened to their exertions, they occupied themselves with zeal and efficiency in promoting the cause of religion in the narrower vineyard to which Providence

for the present had limited their labours. For this purpose they dispersed themselves throughout the cities and villages of the kingdom of Bongo, every where preaching and converting thousands, braving alike the anger of the bonzes and the prejudices of the people; and three noble hospitals, erected at this time in the city of Funay, bear witness to the holy indifference to all personal considerations of safety with which, even in the darkest hour of defeat, they could press the most unpalatable doctrines of the Christian religion upon the minds of a proud and irritable nation. These hospitals were destined for the reception of foundlings, of lepers, and of the sick poor,—three classes of persons for whom the Japanese had hitherto been taught, both by the laws of their country and its religious institutions, to entertain feelings not only of utter indifference, but of profound contempt. No wonder, then, that the heathens marvelled at a charity universal as the faith which had called it into being; or that the king was filled with still higher admiration when, declining the pecuniary aid which he offered to themselves, the Jesuit Fathers besought him to bestow it on these holy institutions; or that the converts, charmed at this unexpected mode of exercising that tenderness which the very name of Jesus had already generated in their bosoms, should have applied themselves to the solace of the sick with a sweetness and devotion, which was perhaps almost a higher panegyric on the religion of love they had embraced, than the most eloquent oration ever preached among them in its honour by their spiritual fathers.

CHAPTER II.

The bonzes of Frenoxama. Father Villela's voyage to Miako. Extraordinary conversion of two principal bonzes. Success at Saccay. The Kumbo's levée. Nobunanga restores the Kumbo's family at Miako, and destroys the bonzes of Frenoxama; conspiracy against him defeated; his magnificent tournament; his favourable disposition towards Christianity.

It will be remembered that Miako was alike the object of the dearest aspirations of Francis, and the place where, to all human appearances, his efforts had met with the most signal defeat. But it was not so in the eyes of God. The seed which the Saint had sown, amid opprobrium and insult, had fallen upon a hard soil; it lay dormant indeed for a time, but now it was about to spring up, and to yield fruit hundredfold to his successors in the harvest.

Very near the city lay the mountain of Frenoxama, famous as the principal gathering-place of the bonzes, and the residence of the *Jaco*, their spiritual pontiff. At one time they are said to have possessed no fewer than three thousand monasteries within its precincts; but even before the arrival of the Jesuits in Japan, the number had been gradually reduced to six hundred. At the head of one of these houses was an old man of great reputation for sanctity and learning; and vague rumours reached him, slowly and by degrees, of a stranger bonze who had preached a new doctrine in Miako and its neighbourhood. The little that he heard made him long to hear yet more; and filled with astonishment at the sublime wisdom which he could discern even in such fragments of Xavier's discourses as were repeated to him by others, he wrote to Father Torres, beseeching him to visit Frenoxama, and assuring him that nothing but his age and infirmity prevented him from

proceeding at once to Bongo, to be instructed in the faith. The father would have gladly accepted this unlooked-for invitation, but he also was too much broken by years and labours to venture on such a journey; he sent therefore in his stead an exposition of the Christian doctrine in Japanese characters for the further instruction of the bonze, and as soon afterwards as he could, he despatched one of his brethren to complete his conversion.

Father Villela was the Jesuit chosen for this mission; so he shaved his head and beard,—without which disguise it would have been impossible to gain admittance to any of the monasteries of the mountains,—and then took shipping for Miako. Innumerable were the disasters which he encountered on his way. Almost on starting, he had refused to join the sailors in a superstitious offering to their gods; and from that moment every possible misfortune that occurred, every foul wind, or rising tempest, or unwelcome calm, was attributed to the divine indignation against this impious traveller. They certainly did what they could on their own account to avenge the insulted feelings of their idols; for they retrenched his provisions, beat him like a slave, abandoned him for ten days together on a desert shore, exposed to every vicissitude of wind and weather, and finally landed him far away from his destination, which they left him to seek in the best way that he could. After this, it was in vain that he sought a passage on board any of the remaining ships in the harbour. His ill fame had gone before him, and no one would run the risk of his presence; nor was it until every other vessel had put out to sea that he obtained a passage in a little bark, which, ill fitted as it was for so long a voyage, succeeded in landing him safely twelve leagues from Miako, on the 29th November, 1559.

His first thought was for the poor bonze who had first invited him; but when he reached the mountain, he found to his inexpressible sorrow that the old man was dead. The bonze, however, who had succeeded

him in his office, and probably in some of his opinions also, gave a most consoling account of his death; for to his latest breath he professed his belief in the mysteries Father Torres had unfolded to him by letter, declaring that he renounced his idols, and died a Christian in heart and soul. At the request of this successor, Father Villela preached to the other bonzes of the mountain; and then, going straight to Miako, he and his companion spent ten days in prayer, fasting, and mortification; after which, having as he hoped obtained the blessing of Heaven on his labours, he took his station in the market-place, holding aloft the Cross of Christ, and calling upon all to come and hear the exposition of His Gospel. He was eloquent and learned, as well as holy; and it was soon universally acknowledged that, in each of these particulars, the European bonze far surpassed any of the native worthies of Frenoxama. All the learned, the idle, and the curious of the nation flocked eagerly to hear him, while the defeated bonzes prepared to assail him with their usual weapons of calumny and fraud.

It is curious to observe how these modern heathens unconsciously imitated the heathens of ancient times, by preferring precisely the same charges against the Christian name as the Romans had done some fifteen hundred years before. Similarity of calumny surely argues similarity in the doctrine that has called it forth; and when we find the Jesuit preachers of Japan accused as devourers of men's flesh, suckers of blood, and murderers of infants, it is impossible not to identify the Eucharistic Sacrifice at Rome in the first four centuries with that of Japan in the sixteenth, as the common source and cause of these horrible accusations. Neither in the first case nor in the last could people listen to them unmoved; the inhabitants of Miako soon shrank from Father Villela as they would have shrunk from a murderer and a monster; and as nobody would any longer give him a lodging, he and his companion were obliged to take up their abode in a ruined shed. Here

he lived for three months, in the depth of winter, without bed or fire, exposed to all weathers, for the hut was roofless; feeding on roots, sleeping on the ground, in constant peril of his life, steeped to the lips in suffering and insult,—for the very children were never weary of abusing him as a man-eater; yet, spite of all these outward miseries, clinging with supernatural tenacity to the mission which Xavier himself had been compelled to abandon, and resolved to shed his blood in Miako or to win it to his Lord.

What could resist such courage and perseverance? His very life seemed a greater miracle than the religion that he preached. By degrees the people became convinced of his innocence; the nobles again flocked to hear him; a church was built, a residence bought, and all seemed going on to the utmost of his wishes, when one day a rumour ran through the city that two bonzes (they were magicians too, as well as bonzes) had been deputed by the Kumbo to examine into the precepts of the Christian religion, and to decide whether or not it was compatible with the safe government of the kingdom. Impartiality was not to be expected from such judges as these. The Christian converts gave up all for lost; and at their request Father Villela withdrew a few leagues out of the city, in order to avoid the insults which the bonzes, intoxicated by their hopes of certain success, were already heaping on the professors of the Christian religion. Truly the ways of God are not our ways, nor His thoughts our thoughts. While the one party was thus glorying in its expected triumph, and the other was weeping for its anticipated defeat, Divine Providence led one of the future umpires into the presence of an unlettered Christian (for such he seems to have been) of the name of James. The bonze questioned him concerning his religion: at first James was unwilling to reply; but finding that his silence was misinterpreted into the possession of secrets which it was unlawful to betray, the generous Christian spoke boldly out; and following the inspiration that was

given him, he poured forth a long and eloquent oration on the immortality of the soul, the punishment of the wicked and reward of the good,—these being precisely the doctrines most frequently denied by the anti-religionists of the court. Contrary to every expectation, the bonze listened to him with profound attention; and no sooner had he concluded, than he bade him fetch the Jesuit father, adding, that if the scholar could speak with such sublimity, what mighty things might he not learn from the master! James lost not a moment in going to Saccay, where Father Villela then was; but when he had declared his mission in the full assembly of the faithful, neither pastor nor people could believe in its reality. Notwithstanding this incredulity, however, the father would willingly have obeyed the summons, but that the Christians positively forbade him; and one of the Jesuit brothers was despatched in his stead. Three days passed, and nothing was heard of Miako or the messenger. The Christians foreboded evil; and another was about to be despatched to discover his fate, when he made his appearance with the joyful tidings of a successful mission. According to the account he brought, the bonze-umpires were only awaiting the father's arrival to be received into the Church; and as they were among the most powerful lords of the court, there was little doubt that very many others would follow their example. When he had ceased speaking, the assembled Christians lifted up their voices, weeping, and thanking God for that infinite power over the human heart by which He had changed the fiercest enemies of the Church into its most zealous defenders. As for Father Villela, he lost not a moment in setting out for Miako, where he found every thing just as Brother Laurence had described; and by the influence of the converted bonzes, an imperial edict was afterwards obtained for the toleration of the Christian faith, which soon began to justify the anticipations of Francis, and to diffuse itself rapidly over the adjoining kingdoms.

Saccay had already received it previously to the late troubles, Father Villela having been invited thither by the governor of the town; and that nobleman, after having been baptised himself, fitted up a room as a church, where the father and his companion preached twice a day, converting many of the inhabitants, and even a portion of the garrison. The world wondered to see these last exchange the license and libertinism of a garrison-life for the modesty and devotion of the Christian profession; but they wondered yet more at the precocious sanctity of the nobleman's children. The boy was not fourteen when he received baptism; and being naturally of a gracious appearance, the candour and modesty which from that moment beamed on his brow made his beauty almost angelic; while his young heart was so replenished by the Holy Ghost, that he already began to imitate in his life the virtues and austerities of the saints. His sister Monica deserves to be yet more particularly mentioned, as the first maiden on the records of Japan who consecrated herself to God in the holy state of virginity. He Himself had inspired her with this desire at the instant of baptism; and in order to obtain grace for a state which she knew must expose her to the persecution of relations and ridicule of friends, she began a practice from that moment of fasting three times a week, and spending several hours daily in meditation on the Passion of our Lord; and in this course she persevered for many years, until, having obtained the consent of her parents, and the approbation of the Jesuit father who at that time guided her conscience, she joyfully cut off her hair, and bound herself by vow to that holy state which, like the saints of old, she had chosen from her childhood.

But we must return to Miako, where Father Villela, no longer hampered by the opposition of the government, threw himself into the labours of the mission with all the zeal of a true son of St. Ignatius. By day he was always preaching and hearing confessions, without intermission; while his nights were devoted to the trans-

lation of Catholic books into the Japanese language, of which he was by this time become a perfect master. Such unmitigated toil soon wrought upon him the effect of years; and when at last Father Froes was sent to his assistance, he wondered to see him, at the age of forty-two, grey-haired and broken down like a man of four-score.

The new missionary chanced to arrive about the season when the great lords and princes of Japan pay their yearly homage and tribute to the Kumbo, who receives them as a divinity, cross-legged, and without giving any sign of recognition, save when he condescendingly waves his fan to any one whom he more particularly desires to honour.

Father Villela was in the frequent habit of attending this levée; and he now took with him Father Froes, habited in surplice and stole, and wearing over these, in honour of the occasion, a cloak of 'linsey woolsey' edged with a golden fringe. Poor enough it must have been, for all its tinsel trimmings; and yet it seems to have particularly taken the fancy of the Kumbo; for after they had left his presence, he sent a special messenger to request another view of the father bonze's "fine cloak." "I know not," says the chronicler, with wonderful *naïveté*, "what there could have been in this garment,—which I am credibly informed was made by the father himself, and lined with old stuffs of divers colours,—to make it worthy the attention of a prince in possession of all that was beautiful and precious in Japan; but as I cannot believe he could really admire a patched and parti-coloured cloak, I must conclude it was not the article itself, but the newness of the fashion, which made him covet to see it." Possibly it was those very patches and parti-colours which caused it to be an object of curiosity to the most luxurious monarch in Japan; but however this may have been, it was safely returned after half an hour's examination, and its owner conducted to the mother of the Kumbo, whom he found surrounded by her ladies in a kind of oratory adorned

with a statue of the god Amida, richly diademed, and with a golden glory on his head. History does not tell us whether she also took a fancy to the wonderful cloak; but at all events she received both the fathers very graciously, offering them *cha* in cups of precious metal, and *xacane*, a kind of sweetmeat much prized in Japan, which she condescendingly presented with her own hands at the end of little sticks.

A very short time after this interview, the Kumbo was deprived of his crown and life by one of those sudden revolutions which render the history of Japan so changeful and perplexing; and during the anarchy which followed, the fathers were banished, and compelled to retire once more to Bongo. According to the barbarous custom of the country, the Kumbo's family were included in his destruction; one only escaped the general massacre, and he took refuge at the court of Nobunanga, king of Boari. Nobunanga was brave, powerful, and ambitious,—the best general and ablest politician in Japan; yet probably, in the first instance, it was rather pity for an injured prince than any ulterior designs in his own favour that induced him to take the part of the royal exile, and to send an army under Vatadono, the general of his forces, in pursuit of the rebels. Having succeeded in raising a considerable force, the latter did not seek to avoid the contest; for whatever the people might think of the murder of their monarch, they had no wish to see their country in the hands of a stranger, especially of one so ambitious and powerful as Nobunanga was reported to be. For a considerable time the two armies lay encamped within sight of each other; the Christian squadrons on either side being plainly distinguished from the rest by the cross on their standards, and the medals engraved with the name of Jesus on their helmets. It was winter; and Christmas night finding them in the midst of these warlike preparations, to the infinite astonishment of the heathens, the Christian warriors, by mutual consent, laid down their arms; and entering the town of Saccay, confessed and communi-

cated, and attended to all the religious services of the Church; after which they dined, friends and foes together, in the house of Father Froes, and then separated in peace and good-will to their several encampments.

The battle which ensued terminated in favour of Nobunanga's forces; and with his accustomed despatch, that monarch brought the new Kumbo to Miako, and in full court expressed his gratitude to the general through whose prowess he had been enabled to accomplish this triumph. Upon this hint Vatadono spoke; his brother was about to become a Christian, he himself was one in heart already, and for all the services he had rendered Nobunanga, he only craved the recal of the Jesuit fathers. A bonze present ventured to suggest the danger of this measure; but Nobunanga hated the bonzes, and despised their idols: he answered therefore with words of cutting scorn; and by his express permission Father Froes was speedily restored to his forsaken church. Vatadono took him directly to visit the king, whom they found on the drawbridge, superintending the new works of a palace he was building for the Kumbo. He received them most graciously, making Father Froes cover his head on account of the intense heat of the sun; and after a conference of two hours, during which he inveighed frequently and fiercely against the wickedness and hypocrisy of the bonzes, he gave him full permission to preach the Gospel throughout the kingdom, and so dismissed him.

From that time the father made it a matter of courtesy to visit occasionally at the palace; and on one of these occasions Nobunanga caused him to dispute publicly with a celebrated bonze on the immortality of the soul, and expressed himself afterwards extremely satisfied with the arguments of the father. This was sufficient to excite the jealousy of his antagonist; and in his thirst for vengeance, he not only obtained a license from the Dairi to kill the father wherever he could find him, but likewise contrived by secret intrigue so to wind himself into Nobunanga's favour, that during a

temporary absence of that monarch from Miako, he was created chief minister of the kingdom, with a power scarcely inferior to that which had been assigned to the Kumbo. Such an appointment would have been fatal to the interests of religion; and Vatadono advised Father Froes to follow the king to his present abode, in order to make a representation of the ill conduct of the bonze. This advice was taken; and the father found Nobunanga surrounded by his nobles: he instantly left them, however, to give him a most kind reception; and then, being inordinately vain of his riches and grandeur, insisted on showing him all over his palace. There was no refusing so gracious an offer; so on they went, through halls, chambers, galleries, cabinets, and offices, "which," says the historian, "the very lords would never have seen, had it not been for the father." Nobunanga even introduced him without ceremony into the apartments of his children, and of the ladies of his household, discoursing all the while about the ill-mannered bonze, and affairs at Miako. After this vain-glorious promenade, the father was invited to take some refreshment; a little dwarf was made to dance for his amusement; and the king "whispering the young prince," one of the royal children presented both the stranger and his majesty with a cup of tea, the highest honour that can be done to an inferior in Japan. That night he remained by especial invitation at the palace, and the next morning was dismissed with such a letter to the Dairi as put an end to all the vindictive projects of his foe, who being afterwards discovered in the commission of enormous crimes, would certainly have been condemned to die, had not his spiritual chief interceded in his favour. As it was, he was stripped of all his dignities and possessions; and from being one of the richest, was reduced to the condition of the meanest in Japan.

It is melancholy to relate, that Vatadono, the originator and generous promoter of all these advantages to the Church, was never personally enrolled

among her children. He was at his own fortress, and actually under instruction for baptism, when his estates were unhappily invaded by a neighbouring lord; and in the engagement that ensued he was left dead on the field. The Christians mourned for him as for their father and protector; but most of all Father Froes was inconsolable, because he had died without baptism; nevertheless he trusted that, for his good intentions, and for the services he had so pre-eminently rendered to religion, Almighty God in His goodness would extend His mercy to him.

Soon after his death, Nobunanga resolved to destroy the bonzes of Frenoxama, who on every occasion had endeavoured to thwart his plans and effect his ruin; and for this purpose he marched an army to the foot of their mountain. The terrified solitaries endeavoured to propitiate him with a large sum of money, while at the same time they sought to rouse his superstitious fears by representing the sanctity of the spot he had invaded; but Nobunanga, with all the hard irony of his nature, sent them word "that he needed not their money; and that as to the sanctity of Frenoxama, if their gods were really the bonzes' friends, they would doubtless protect them; but if, on the contrary, they were foes, he himself would avenge their quarrel." True to his word, the mountain was instantly surrounded; troops of soldiers climbed its precipices, and entering the monasteries, put all to fire and sword. Some of the wretched bonzes cast themselves headlong from the rocks; others took sanctuary in the temple, or sought concealment in the caves and grottos. But Nobunanga had taken his measures too surely to allow a chance of escape. He burnt the temple, with every other building on the mountain; sent his men into all its holes and caverns, as if he had been chasing wild beasts; and finally succeeded so well in his scheme of vengeance, that not one of those who dwelt on Frenoxama was left to tell the tale of its destruction. Satisfied with this wholesale butchery, he then retired to

his own kingdom, leaving the Kumbo to play monarch for a time at Miako; though he took care to reserve all the real authority of that office to himself.

But in spite of this assumed moderation, the vast power he really possessed, and the magnificence in which he lived, excited the jealousy of the surrounding princes, six of whom entered into a conspiracy against him. Before they declared open war, however, they were very anxious to obtain possession of a certain fortress, which, from its strength and position, would be invaluable to their cause. This fortress was governed by Justo Ucondono, who, with his father Dairi, was a most fervent Christian; but after some negotiation, he was unhappily persuaded into sending his children to the court of the conspirators as hostages for the safe-keeping of the castle. Nobunanga was much too far-seeing a politician not to be soon aware of the conspiracy that was on foot; and having just the same reasons for wishing to retain the castle which his enemies had for desiring to gain it, he sought to wrest it from Justo Ucondono by force of arms. Failing in this, he had recourse to stratagem. Knowing the governor to be a true-hearted Christian, and one, therefore, who would probably prefer the interests of religion to any worldly advantage which could be offered to himself, he sent him word, that if the fortress were not instantly surrendered, he would kill the Jesuit fathers, burn the churches, and root the very name of Christian out of his dominions. It were vain to attempt a description of the agony of Justo in this terrible dilemma. If he surrendered, his children would be sacrificed to the rage of the conspirators; if he held out, he knew too well that Nobunanga also would be as good as his word, and that all the Christians of the kingdom would be involved in one common ruin through his means. Thus torn to pieces by his fatherly tenderness on the one side, and his anxieties for religion on the other, he wrote to Father Organtin (who had now succeeded Father Froes on the mission), imploring his advice.

That father recommended the matter earnestly to God; and then going to the fortress, told him that as Nobunanga was, in fact, his sovereign, it was his duty to obey his orders in preference to those of any other monarch; but at the very mention of the word *obey*, the governor's wife and mother broke in upon the conference, and poured forth such bitter lamentations over the probable fate of his children, that he became yet more undecided than before; and at a late hour the father took his leave, without having succeeded in effecting any arrangement. After his departure, the wretched man felt more miserable than ever; his love for his children, the tears of his wife and mother, were rending his heart; but the ruin of religion, the massacre of the fathers, and persecution of the Christians, which he foresaw would be the inevitable consequences of his present conduct, were yet more terrible thoughts to bear. In the agonising conflict which ensued, he retired to his cabinet, fell on his knees, and after a short but fervent prayer, rose like a second Abraham, prepared to sacrifice all he held dearest in the world to the dictates of conscience. That very night he was at the court of Nobunanga, who received him with unexpected kindness; but the father's heart was heavy for his children, and no princely favour could give him comfort, until at length he heard that his father, Dairi, had gone to the court of the conspirators, and with infinite difficulty had succeeded in obtaining the surrender of the hostages. He was finally restored to the government of the fortress, the conspirators were defeated in open battle, and two of their kingdoms being confiscated for their treachery, were added to those already in Nobunanga's possession.

Some of these kingdoms he now parcelled out to his sons. He had long since entirely set aside the poor Kumbo, depriving him even of the shadow of greatness which he had formerly possessed; and then, either intoxicated by success, or with a view to the conciliation of the other princes, he resolved upon giving a kind

of national tournament in honour of his victories. In order to make it as magnificent as possible, a royal proclamation forbade the attendance of any lord who was unable to go to the most extravagant expenses in his equipment; and on their part, hoping to win the favour of a monarch who was now considered invincible, the princes vied with each other in the splendour of their arrangements and the prodigality of their presents to the royal donor of the fête. The general of the forces made gifts to the amount of fifty thousand ducats; another spent twenty thousand on his own equipment; a third made his appearance with fifty footmen dressed in the most sumptuous silks of China; while Justo Ucondono changed the colours worn by his train, and the fashion of their garments, no less than seven times in the course of the day. The procession was opened by seven hundred cavaliers, with their attendants in rich liveries; then came Nobunanga's three sons, shining in gold and jewels; after them the monarch himself, surrounded by innumerable officers and attendants, mounted on a superb war-horse, and looking as if a shower of precious stones had fallen on his garments. "It was not difficult," says the chronicler, "to distinguish him in that crowd; for he showed himself by the majesty of his presence and the lustre of his garments, china-silk wrought in precious stones, with a scarf of inestimable value cast across his shoulders; the housings, bridle, and frontlet of his horse were all of silver and gold, the reins were set in pearls, and the stirrups of pure gold; a thousand cavaliers of the royal household followed, and as soon as the king entered the lists the air was rent with the acclamations of the multitude. Then the gentlemen of the tournament ranged themselves in their respective positions, running two and two and three and three against each other. The royal princes greatly distinguished themselves by their prowess; but to Nobunanga, who ran last, the victory was awarded." And the good old chronicler assures us he deserved it for his dexterity, never for a moment seeming to sus-

pect the possibility of his owing it to the adulations and slavish fears of his subjects.

Nobunanga was now (in the year 1581) on the highest pinnacle of his ambition: the monarch of thirty-two kingdoms, and by the power such enormous possessions conferred, the virtual ruler of all. Feared even more than he was hated, he did what he pleased; lowered kingdoms undisputed on his children, massacred the bonzes without opposition wherever he could find them; and patronised the foreign preachers without regarding the murmurs of that heathen priesthood, or the superstitious terrors of their fond adherents. Yet, though he certainly entertained a strong feeling in favour of the Christian religion, he never became a Christian himself. Possibly ambition had blinded him to desires of aught but material greatness; or he hesitated to exchange the voluptuous life of a heathen monarch for the stern morality of the Christian's creed; or allowing both these circumstances their proper weight, we shall probably find a third, and a far more insurmountable obstacle to his conversion, in the hard incredulity as to the honesty of any priesthood, which his thorough knowledge of the hypocrisy of the bonzes had rooted deeply in his heart. Any suspicion of the motives of the preacher would of course cast a reflection on the religion which he preached; and that Nobunanga, notwithstanding the honourable testimony which he ever bore to the virtues of the fathers, could never entirely divest himself of some doubt as to the ruling principle of their conduct, the following anecdote will sufficiently prove.

Father Organtin had been paying him a visit at the palace, and after a private interview of considerable duration, the king caused the great doors of the audience-chamber to be thrown open, exclaiming, so that all those without might hear, "Prepare your wives and children to receive the faith, for the arguments of these foreign bonzes are irresistible." Then, turning to Brother Laurence, the companion of the father, he

bade him prove to all assembled both the unity of God and the fact of retribution after death. The brother obeyed; and while the hearts of all present were thrilling beneath the torrent of eloquence which flowed from his lips, Nobunanga took him by the hand, and once more, and as if by an irresistible impulse, led him and the father into his private apartments. There, far from the curious eyes and ears of his courtiers, he conjured them to say without reserve or falsehood whether they really believed the things which they taught, adding that several bonzes who held in public the doctrines upon which Brother Laurence had been discoursing, had acknowledged to him in private that they believed in reality nothing of the kind, merely fostering such fancies in the people under the idea of promoting the public welfare. Then Father Organtin, with a grave and serious countenance befitting the solemnity of his words, vowed by all he held sacred, by the might and majesty of God Himself, that he had never preached one iota of doctrine in Japan which he did not as firmly believe to be true as if he had seen it with his own eyes; and taking a geographical card which chanced to lie on the table, he pointed out the distant land from whence he had come, the many perils he had encountered on the way, the hardships, the insults, and even dangers in the midst of which he was daily living at Miako, and insisted upon the folly and madness of which he would have been guilty if he had endured all this, and more, merely for the propagation of a ridiculous fable in which he did not himself believe.

The king listened with profound attention, and when Father Organtin concluded by touching sweetly and eloquently upon the certain hope of heaven which cheered him on through his earthly labours, Nobunanga could bear it no longer, but giving way to a burst of uncontrollable feeling, he declared he was so enchanted with the father's words, that he could hardly make up his mind to allow his departure from the palace. That one moment of hesitation was perhaps the turning-point

in his career. Grace had knocked loudly at his heart, or why was he so unwilling to allow the father to leave him? It had knocked; but he would not open. Pride, and the love of pleasure, and cold infidelity, with all its train of ungenerous suspicions, were in the citadel before it; and he would not drive them hence for its admittance. The call was unheeded, the impulse checked; and sadly and reluctantly, but still without an effort to retain him, he suffered his faithful monitor to depart. So the die was cast, the good inspiration gone for ever; and Nobunanga, for all his pride of intellect and scorn of the bonzes' knavish superstitions, closed his reign at last by a mandate compelling his people to such a monstrous act of gross idolatry, as would have disgraced the rule of the least enlightened of his ancestors.

CHAPTER III.

The castle of Ekandono. Sumitando, king of Omura; his zeal tempered with discretion. Father Torres goes to Vocoxiuva, and settles there. Conversion of Sumitando and thirty nobles. Conspiracy against him defeated. Jesuits settled at Nangasaki. Conversion of the king of Arima. Christianity introduced into Goto. The king's son converted.

WHEN Francis and his companions took their departure from Kangoxima, to seek for a more hospitable city as the theatre of their labours, chance led them beneath the towers of a lonely fortress, seated on a steep rock, and so entirely surrounded by a broad deep moat as to be utterly inaccessible excepting by a drawbridge. Francis paused as he passed; and no sooner was he descried from the lofty roof, than a servant was despatched with a kind and courteous message from the governor of Ekandono (for this was the name of the castle), and a request that he and his way-worn companions would enter and take some refreshment. The true refreshment of Francis, like that of his Divine Master, was "to do the will of Him who sent him, by making perfect His work;" and so well did he accomplish it on this occasion, that before he left the fortress he had instructed and baptised the wife of its chieftain, together with his eldest son and seventeen soldiers of the garrison. Among these last was a venerable old man, whose prudence and virtue had caused him to be respected by the others as a father. To him Francis confided the care of this unlooked-for little flock, giving him for their further and more complete instruction a written form of baptism, an abstract of our Saviour's life, an exposition of the creed, the litanies and penitential psalms, together with a table of Church festivals throughout the year; all in the Japanese language. He likewise, with the consent of the governor, selected a spa-

cious apartment for the religious exercises of the faithful; and bidding the old man assemble them there at stated times, particularly on Fridays and Sundays, for prayer and pious reading, he gave them his last blessing, and so departed.

Thirteen years passed slowly by, and no other missionary had as yet approached that solitary fortress, to quicken the piety or renew the instruction which these good neophytes had so scantily received. St. Francis, their only father in the faith, was gone to his reward, "exceeding great," in heaven; the other missionaries were sent perforce to the crowded cities and more important kingdoms which demanded their aid; but Father Torres had never forgotten these poor people or their generous eagerness to receive the faith; and at last, finding that he had no chance of being able to spare a priest for the purpose, he sent one of the lay brothers to visit them instead. This time there was no need to wait until a servant came with an invitation to enter. The Christians knew him at once to be of the same calling as the holy man who years before, with his saintly looks and words of fire, had won them so happily to the knowledge of the true God; eagerly and joyfully therefore they crowded round him, making a thousand inquiries after their dear father; and when they heard that he was dead, women and children, young men and old, all together burst into tears. Brother Almeida did what he could to console them, telling them of the holy and happy death of St. Francis; while they on their part showed him the book of doctrine and the discipline which he had left behind him, and which they had ever preserved as most precious relics.

The old man who had been appointed as their director was also dead; but Almeida soon discovered that under his guidance they had not only preserved the fervour and innocence of their conversion, but had likewise preached the faith so effectually, both by word and example, that during the two or three days he remained among them no fewer than seventy of their brethren

solicited baptism at his hands. The son of the governor, who had been baptised by Xavier, was now placed at their head, Almeida associating with him in this charge a young Japanese of rare piety and attainments, and afterwards the author of an abridgment of the Scriptures, which proved of infinite utility in the young Church of Japan. He it was who, when the brother asked him, "What he would do if the king should command him to abjure his religion?" made that answer, no less remarkable for its fervent zeal than for the nice appreciation of the requirements of the Christian law which it so clearly implied: "My father, thus in such a case would I reply to my king: 'Do you wish, O king! that I should be faithful and true to your service, moderate, patient, and obedient, mindful of your interests and forgetful of my own, full of charity to my neighbour, and of forbearance to all who injure or oppose me? Command me, then, to be a Christian; for only from a Christian can such virtues reasonably be expected.'" The noble sentiments expressed in this speech were shared by every member of the garrison, and the governor himself was the only man among them who remained a heathen. Even he was an infidel only in appearance; for he promised the brother that he would become a Christian as soon as he could do so without exciting the displeasure of the king. We know not whether the grace thus rashly rejected was ever offered him again, Almeida having been obliged to depart almost immediately afterwards, in consequence of letters which Father Torres had received from Sumitando, the king of Omuro.

This prince was the son of the king of Arima; but his father had abdicated some time previously in favour of his eldest son; he was himself called to the kingdom of Omuro by the general consent of its nobles, their last monarch having died without leaving any legitimate heir to the crown. Sumitando was generous, noble-minded, and renowned for courage; and he had reigned for some years, honoured and beloved by all

his subjects, when a Japanese book, written by Father Villela in answer to the objections of the bonzes, chanced to fall into his hands. The light of truth seems to have flashed at once without a shadow of doubt on that ingenuous mind, and it is impossible to read his history without feeling that he rose from this first perusal of the Christian argument with a firm and uncompromising resolution to become a Christian himself. Prudence, however, was happily blended with that great firmness of purpose which was the chief characteristic of this prince. He knew the opposition which the Christian preachers had every where met with from the bonzes; he knew how, in the first instance, they had been compelled to leave Kangoxima, how afterwards they had been imprisoned, and beaten, and barely escaped with their lives at Firando; how the multitude had been hounded on to their destruction at Miako; and how even at Bongo, under the very eye and smile of the king himself, their liberties and lives had been often imperilled by the hatred of the bonzes, who raised tumult after tumult in order to drive them from the city. He knew all this, and therefore he resolved to pave the way for their peaceful reception in his own dominions, by representing to his council the advantages which would accrue to the nation from traffic with the Portuguese; and when he saw that they were perfectly alive to the importance of this measure, he wrote with their consent to Father Torres, offering his countrymen the port of Vocoxiuva as a convenient place for the landing of their goods; while at the same time he seized the opportunity of privately inviting him to send some of his religious to settle in the same town.

This was the business upon which Almeida had been recalled; but, reflecting on the immense importance which such an acquisition might prove to the interests of religion, Father Torres afterwards resolved, spite of his age and infirmities, to go to Vocoxiuva himself, which he accordingly did in the year 1562. Under his auspices a church was speedily erected; and no

sooner was it known that a father was in the town, than the Christians of Firando and the neighbouring kingdoms flocked thither in crowds. Many of these poor people had been more than a year without any opportunity of attending their religious duties, so that Father Torres was occupied night and day in hearing their confessions; for they were so engrossed by these pious exercises as almost to *live* in the church, regardless alike of sleep and of refreshment. Their fervour was still further increased during the holy season of Lent; and on Good Friday they accompanied the father, clothed in sackcloth, and with crowns of thorns upon their heads, to erect a large cross upon a neighbouring mountain; the men scourging themselves with disciplines, and the women shedding tears of sorrow, as they went along. Then with Easter came a change in their devotions; and as they had hitherto endeavoured to show their sorrow for sin, and their sympathy with their Saviour by voluntary chastisement and penances, so now, in the true spirit of the Church, they sought to unite themselves to the joy of His resurrection by joining in the procession of the Blessed Sacrament, crowned with flowers and clad in their richest and most costly apparel. The Blessed Sacrament was carried by Father Torres beneath a magnificent canopy; and as they neared the port, and the ships of Portugal fired a royal salute, the good old man burst into tears of joy, to think how the cross of Christ was at length honoured, and His name adored, amid a people who, for so many ages, had set up the worst passions of the human heart as the objects of their wildest worship and most passionate admiration.

Up to this time Sumitando seems to have taken no notice of the fathers, in order probably that he might avoid rousing the jealousy of the bonzes; but he now paid a visit to Vocoxiuva, and Father Torres immediately waited on him, begging him to dine at their house, as the king of Bongo was occasionally in the habit of doing. The invitation was graciously accepted, and the

Portuguese merchants, who were at that time in port, not only helped the hospitality of the fathers by preparing a magnificent feast, but by waiting themselves on his majesty as he sat at their table. This important matter happily concluded, Father Torres conducted Sumitando to the church, where he was almost ravished out of himself by a picture of the Virgin Mother and her Divine Child, whose beauty exceeded any thing that he had ever before seen in his kingdom.

One of the brothers conversed with him for some time on the subject of the Christian law; and Father Torres presented him with a gilded fan which had been brought from Miako, and upon which was painted the sacred Name of Jesus, with a cross above and three nails beneath. The king earnestly desired to know the meaning of these cyphers; and Brother Fernandes explained to him that it was the sacred Name of Jesus, which Father Torres earnestly wished should be engraved on his majesty's heart, seeing that it contained many mysteries, the knowledge of which was needful to salvation. Sumitando took his leave; but in his anxiety to know more, he was again at the father's house directly after supper; and after giving him a short explanation of the creed, Brother Fernandes told him the history of Constantine the Great, and of the cross which appeared in the skies when he was about to give battle to his enemies. A king himself, and with the spirit of a hero burning in his bosom, the quick mind of Sumitando seized at once upon this story and made it his own. Before he left that night he had learned to make the sign of the cross; and the next morning he sent a nobleman to tell Father Torres that he would become a Christian as soon as an heir was born to his crown; that to do so before would only create disturbance, and hinder the real progress of religion; and therefore he besought him to pray to God that his desire on this head might be speedily accomplished. In the meantime he craved leave to have a cross embroidered on his royal robes, in order to show that it was indeed engraven on

his heart; for so great was the reverence which he already felt for the sign of our redemption, that without an express permission to that effect, he would not venture to carry it publicly about him. In order to estimate to the full the heroism of this request, we must bear in mind that the death of the cross was the worst punishment of the meanest felons in Japan, just as it had been in days of old among the Romans. It was, therefore, no trifling proof of sincerity in the converts, that they could bear to see this emblem raised aloft in their churches; but that a king, and one, too, so lately instructed in the faith, and who had not yet received the grace of baptism, should have reverenced it so highly as to wish to bear it upon his person, betokens an inward change such as nothing but a miracle of Divine grace could have effected. So it was, however, and having received a favourable answer from Father Torres, he caused a splendid cross of gold to be made, which he hung round his neck when he went to visit his brother the king of Arima, at whose court he spoke so eloquently in favour of the true religion, that the latter also resolved to become a Christian as soon as he had terminated a war in which he was then engaged.

Some months after this, Sumitando once more made his appearance at Vocoxiuva, and in a private interview told Father Torres, that his queen having given him hopes of an heir to his crown, he was resolved to defer his conversion no longer, and had therefore come with thirty of his lords to ask for baptism at his hands. When the good father heard this declaration, he could not refrain from crying out with the aged Simeon, "Now, Lord, Thou dost dismiss Thy servant according to Thy word, in peace;" and then, following up the idea in his own words, he told the king, that since his life could never again give him such another joy as he was feeling at that moment, he would henceforth ask nothing more of God, save that he might soon depart in peace; and for the rest, he earnestly prayed that his majesty might prove in very deed the Constantine of Japan,

rivalling that emperor henceforth in goodness, as he had hitherto done in courage. The greater part of that night Father Torres spent in the diligent instruction of the royal neophyte and his train; and very early on the next morning these latter repaired to the church, where they found the father and his assistants waiting to receive them. They first repeated the *Credo* upon their knees; then rising, they all extended their arms, as it is the custom of the Japanese to pray, and Father Torres gave them a short but earnest exhortation; after which he administered the sacrament of Baptism to them, beginning with the king. To the latter he gave the name of Bartholomew, by which title we always henceforth find him distinguished in the ecclesiastical annals of his kingdom. Then Sumitando, rising from his knees, bore testimony to the sincerity of those who had been baptised with him. Perhaps he feared that the fact of their being his attendants might cast suspicion on their motives in accompanying him to the font; and he therefore sought to anticipate the calumny by pledging himself, with all the unsuspecting frankness of his nature, for their future fidelity to their religious engagements, assuring Father Torres, with an earnestness quite touching in an Eastern despot, that though he knew they loved him, yet was he very certain they would never have done for his sake what they had that day done for the sake of God. When he left the church on that memorable morning, Sumitando, or Bartholomew, as we must henceforth call him, was so filled with the joy and consolation of the Holy Ghost, that he would willingly have passed days and nights in conversing upon spiritual matters with the father; but war had been declared against him as well as against his brother, and to his great regret he was obliged to depart at once.

It was a sacred custom among the Japanese never to set out on a military expedition without having first demanded success of "Mantiffen," the god of war in Japanese mythology, a divinity usually represented as

wearing a helmet, and having a cock with open wings by way of a crest. The troops were regularly drawn up before its temple, and every soldier salaamed ceremoniously, lowering his arms and kissing his standard as a token of homage and adoration. Great then, we are told, was the astonishment of all, when on the very evening succeeding his baptism, Bartholomew rode up to the temple, and set his army in battle-array around it. They did not know his thoughts; they did not know how the recollection of the heathenish idolatries which he had himself formerly perpetrated before its walls, so filled him with indignation for the defrauded glory of the living God, that he came hither only to trample and destroy. They knew it soon, however; for entering the temple with some of his officers, he commanded the soldiers to break down the less esteemed idols, while he himself, seizing on Mantiffen, hacked and hewed at it with his own sword, until he had cut off its head. Arrived at the seat of war, he took care to profess himself a Christian, by wearing a white robe, upon which the Name of Jesus, a cross, and three nails (the favourite devices of his fan), were embroidered in gold; and whenever his more warlike occupations would allow it, he occupied himself in instructing any who asked it of him, from the highest officers to the lowest soldier of the army, in the mysteries of religion. These he afterwards sent for baptism to the Jesuit fathers who visited the camp; and peace was no sooner restored, than he set about destroying all the idol temples in his dominions, without any regard to the murmurs of the bonzes, whose anger he had formerly been so anxious to deprecate.

Every day also he fed great numbers of the poor of his dominions, waiting upon them himself with a charity which showed how completely the sweet humility of the Christian had superseded the proud fastidiousness of the princely heathen. A similar feeling caused him likewise always to lay down his sword and poniard (a mark of deep submission among the Japanese,) when-

ever he went to visit Father Torres; nor would he ever accept of a seat set apart from the rest of the congregation in church, refusing it on the ground that "all Christians as Christians were equal to himself;" so intuitively had he seized upon that grand principle of the Christian law, which teaches that all men are alike in the sight of God, excepting so far as their own actions may tend to raise or lower them in the scale. The queen's aversion to the faith was for a long time the only cloud upon his joy; and when at length she declared herself desirous of instruction, he was so enchanted, that in his warm-hearted zeal he went himself to Father Torres to acquaint him with the change.

But not all the goodness and virtue of the king could reconcile a portion of his subjects to the destruction of their idols, and the open scorn which he seemed to take pleasure in exhibiting towards their superstitions. On one occasion, when he was called upon to worship the statue of his predecessor, as the kings of Omura had always been in the habit of doing before him, he was so indignant, that he dragged it from its costly shrine and bade them cast it on the fire. Another time he gave great offence by refusing to join in a superstitious feast which his countrymen used to offer once a year to their deceased relatives and friends. On the eve of this festival, most of the citizens leave the town and ride forth to the place where the dead are supposed to assemble. There they courteously salute the spirits of the departed, inviting them to come and take some refreshment in the city; after which they return in company, the living and the dead together; the former conversing all the way as if they really believed the latter were in their presence. The procession is headed by torches, and the city is illuminated in its honour; every house is gaily lighted, and every table magnificently spread, places being carefully left for the invisible guests; for the Japanese imagine the soul to be still sufficiently material in its nature to be capable of deriving nourishment from the more subtle portions of the food. After

dinner, they go and visit the tombs of those whom they believe they have been entertaining; the night is spent in running to and fro throughout the city; and the next evening the souls are reconducted in procession to the place whence they came. The whole country is lighted up, in order that they may not lose their way; and the rooms where they are supposed to have been are carefully beaten with sticks, ostensibly to prevent any dull spirit from lingering behind and so becoming embarrassed as to how to regain its companions, but also, it would seem, from an unwillingness to meet face to face a solitary ghost, at a moment when their courage was unsupported by good cheer and numerous companions. It is difficult to imagine a superstition more absurd in itself, or more likely to be productive of riot and dissipation in its mode of celebration; but although, in order to avoid any imputation of stinginess towards the dead, Bartholomew fed in their stead some thousands of the living poor of his dominions, he could not escape the indignation which the bonzes (the only real losers by his departure from the ancient customs,) every where excited against him.

Rebellion is the natural consequence of such a state of feeling in any kingdom constituted like that of Japan. Accordingly certain lords of the court conspired to drive Bartholomew from the throne; and in order to conceal their real design, they feigned a desire of becoming Christians. The king, however, could not be persuaded that men hitherto noted for their hatred of religion should so suddenly be inspired with a desire to embrace it; and he warned Father Torres against receiving them without long trial and preparation. We are not told whether they ever went so far as really to ask for baptism; but while the affair was pending, they arranged every thing for the intended rebellion, and the king of Firando was engaged to make war on Arima, in order to prevent that monarch from coming to the assistance of his brother. Father Torres was destined to be the first victim; they therefore persuaded the king

that he ought to be invited to the approaching baptism of the queen, and Don Lewis, a Christian nobleman, was sent to invite him. The feast of the Assumption was close at hand when he arrived at Vocoxiuva, and on that day Father Torres was to take his final vows as a Jesuit. Being far advanced in years, and very anxious to set the seal on his religious profession before he died, he resolved not to depart for Omura until after he had done so. On the appointed day the church was crowded both with natives and Portuguese to witness the ceremony; and when the venerable old man, whom many among them had seen grow grey in the service of the mission, fell on his knees before Father Froes, and pronounced his vows with many tears, and all the fervour of one who is accomplishing the last desires of his heart, none could refrain from joining their tears with his. Immediately afterwards Father Froes fell ill, which caused the departure of Father Torres to be again deferred. The conspirators in consequence became alarmed; and Don Lewis being despatched once more with a most urgent message, Father Torres resolved to start the next morning. But while recommending his journey that day in the Mass to God, he felt a sudden desire to put it off a third time; and Lewis was again obliged to depart without him.

The devout marvelled, and many Christians were almost scandalized, thinking the old man was grown weary of labour; but the event showed that a higher than human wisdom had thus arranged it; for on his way back, Lewis was attacked by the conspirators, who, never doubting that Father Torres was in his company, cut the whole party to pieces without mercy, and then marching back to Omura, openly unfurled the standard of revolt. Bartholomew was besieged in his own palace; but brave, strong, and full of confidence in that God whose cause was identified with his own, he cut his way sword in hand through his enemies, and sought a temporary refuge in a forest near the city. There he lay, concealed alike from friend

and foe, and only cared for by a poor Chinese, who brought him his daily food; but escaping afterwards to a fortress near Omura, he was instantly beleaguered by the army of the rebels. The better to palliate their conduct, they offered to lay down their arms if he would renounce the "upstart religion" which he had embraced, and forbid it for the future throughout his dominions; but he boldly sent them word that they might rob him of his kingdom, but not of his faith; for that he valued the Cross above the crown, the title of Christian above that of king; nevertheless, that they should not conquer without a struggle; for he was resolved to hold out to the last, nothing doubting but that in the end the God in whom he trusted would grant him the victory over all his foes.

Such an answer was not likely to conciliate his enemies, who now pushed the siege with redoubled vigour. But Bartholomew held bravely out; he knew not that any one was coming to his assistance, yet he would certainly have died fighting on the ramparts, rather than have yielded an inch of ground to his assailants. Such was the state of affairs on both sides, when one morning an army in battle-array was seen slowly winding down the distant hills. For a time, there was fear and hope and anxious questioning on either side as to which party the advancing hosts were intended to relieve. But Bartholomew at least was not long in doubt: he knew the standard to be his father's. The old man himself was coming to his aid; for, sternly as he hated the Christian creed, he would not consent to see the crown torn from the brow of his son by men whose pretended zeal for the religion of their fathers was, as old Xengandono was well assured, nothing but a mask for the concealment of their own ambitious designs. Bartholomew, encouraged by his father's approach, unfurled his standard emblazoned with the Cross, and confidently promising victory to his men beneath that all-conquering sign, rushed out upon the foe. Xengandono fell upon them at the

same moment from behind; and thus attacked both in front and rear, the rebels soon fled in dismay, leaving Bartholomew not only master of the field, but undisputed monarch of the kingdom of Omura.

The first use Bartholomew made of his recovered authority was to reward the poor Chinese, who had been faithful to him when his fortunes were at the worst. His second was to settle the Jesuits at Nangasaki; for recent events seem to have given him a sort of insight into the future, and the facilities offered by this seaport town for escape from Japan in case of necessity, made it, he thought, a desirable residence for the fathers.

Encouraged by his brother's example, the king of Arima soon afterwards became a Christian; and he would have proceeded to repress idolatry throughout his dominions, had not God, whose designs are inscrutable, taken him out of the world while yet in the first fervour and innocence of his baptismal regeneration. He died in sentiments of the deepest gratitude for the blessing he had just received, and embracing the crucifix which the bonzes vainly strove to tear from his dying grasp. Unfortunately his son was still a mere child; and for a time, at least, his infidel tutors compelled him both to persecute Christianity and worship idols; but at length, his uncle Bartholomew interfering, he not only became a most zealous Christian, but a munificent benefactor to the religion he had embraced. This, however, did not occur until many years after the death of his father; for it was only in 1580 that he received baptism at the hands of the visitor-general of the Japanese missions, and in the same year he founded a college and seminary in the city of Arima; the one for the Jesuit fathers, the other for the youthful nobility of the kingdom, whose education he from that time forward placed under their immediate superintendence.

With equal variations of fortune, though without any such decided co-operation on the part of the court, Christianity was about the same time introduced into

the kingdom of Goto. The king himself was the first to ask for missionaries from Father Torres,—a proceeding by no means uncommon in the early annals of religion in Japan; for the Christian law wrought such a change for the better in the morals of the people (as the king of Satzuma, himself a heathen, explicitly declared in his letter to the provincial), that many sovereigns, however unwilling to submit themselves to its restraints, were yet anxious enough to impose them on their subjects. Father Torres happened to have no priest at his immediate disposal at the moment when this request was made; so he sent Almeida and Lewis, two Jesuit brothers, instead. They arrived in the city of Goto in the year 1566, and were most graciously received at the palace; a couple of saloons were arranged for their public audience, separated from each other by a thin screen of tapestry, behind which the queen and her ladies could see and hear without being seen; and there, in the presence of four hundred lords, with the king himself seated on his throne, Lewis preached against the plurality of gods with so much force and eloquence, that the audience was mute with amazement, and the king himself only ventured to express his delight by slight gestures of the hand. When this brother had finished speaking, Almeida rose, and offered to answer any objections that might be made against the discourse; but the king, replying in the name of all, declared with a burst of genuine emotion, that "he believed in one God, Creator and Lord of all things;" and rising instantly from his throne, the assembly was dissolved. Unfortunately, that very evening the king fell ill; and the bonzes every where proclaimed his illness to be a proof that their gods were not stocks and stones, as the brothers had declared, but on the contrary, the mighty dispensers of life and death, who now inflicted this punishment on the king for having lent a favourable ear to the blasphemers of their power. They said that some counter-charm was needed to undo the spell which the enchanters (for

such they termed the Jesuit brothers) had put upon the monarch; so the sacred books of Xaca were brought in grand procession from the temple, and a few passages, accompanied by sundry strange contortions of the body, were read over the sick man. The brothers awaited the event with considerable anxiety; for if, on the one hand, the king now recovered, it would be attributed to the incantations of the bonzes, while if, on the other, he died, the odium would infallibly be cast upon them, and they would run no small risk of being torn in pieces by the people, who were passionately attached to their sovereign. In this emergency they had recourse to God, who alone could extricate them from their dilemma; and while at prayer, Almeida thought an interior voice spoke to his soul, bidding him go himself and heal the king, putting all his confidence in Heaven. He followed this suggestion, or inspiration, call it which you will; and having some knowledge of medicine from his long attendance in the hospitals, went boldly to the palace and offered to prescribe. The patient was none the better for the religious ceremonies of the bonzes; so as a last resource Almeida's assistance was thankfully accepted, and with such good success, that five days afterwards recovery was complete. The queen and the young prince went themselves to thank him for his services, and the king gave him leave to continue his sermons. But the superstitious fear excited by the bonzes had not yet subsided; and they took such good care to keep it alive, that the people unanimously refused to attend. Almeida therefore wished to depart; but unwilling to lose him, the king issued a proclamation, not only commanding the attendance of his subjects, but promising to assist himself with his eldest son at the conferences of the Christian bonzes. This put an effectual check to the panic: conversions followed thick and fast upon the renewal of the sermons; and the country was in a fair way of being converted altogether, when the revolt of one of his vassals compelled

the king to summon his troops to oppose him. Before he took the field, he wished the officers to swear fidelity after the idolatrous fashion of Japan; that is to say, by partaking of wine which had been offered to the idols, with heavy imprecations against any one failing in allegiance. The general-in-chief was himself a Christian; and in order to comply with the custom, and yet at the same time to save his conscience, he said aloud on taking the cup, that he was only going to drink his majesty's health; but another less compromising spirit, knowing how many might be led astray by such an example, sternly bade him beware how he drank of that idolatrous mixture; and then turning to the king, he frankly told him "that such an oath was considered unlawful by the Christians; but that if they were allowed to swear by the true God and Lord of all things, they would one and all fight for him to the very last drop of their blood, and neither fear nor interest should force them from their allegiance." The king, so far from being offended by this generous freedom of speech, instantly gave the permission demanded, and the Christians took an oath of fidelity in presence of Brother Almeida; who then gave to each a little picture of our Lord and His Blessed Mother, exhorting them to do their duty bravely and to call with confidence upon these holy names in the hour of battle. The combat that soon afterwards ensued was long and bloody; but it ended in favour of the king, who had good cause to congratulate himself on his toleration towards his Christian soldiers; since the very heathens were fain to confess, that to their courage and conduct the glories of the day were principally owing.

After this event the converts became more than ever anxious to have a priest resident among them; and in compliance with their wishes, Father John Baptist de Monti was sent to them. He baptised Prince Lewis, the king's eldest son, and was soon afterwards succeeded on the mission by Father Alexander Valignan, who re-

ceived into the Church the wife of that prince, with seventeen of her ladies. The bonzes were furious at this important accession to the ranks of a religion which they detested; and they threatened the king so openly with rebellion, that although in the first instance he had offered no opposition to his son, he now strongly urged him either to renounce the faith altogether, or at least to conceal it for a time; adding, by way of inducement to this course, that he might still remain a Christian at heart, even while outwardly complying with the observances of the heathens. To this advice the young prince nobly replied, "That much as he regretted being a cause of annoyance or danger to his father, yet he should be unworthy to be called his son, if, through any baseness or want of courage, he dared not openly profess what he inwardly believed; and that as he would far rather forfeit his kingdom than betray his faith, so he was quite willing, if nothing less would content the rebels, to give up both that and his life in the quarrel." The king admired this courage; but he had not strength of mind to imitate it, and an edict was issued commanding all his subjects under pain of death to return to the worship of the idols. By this decided measure he hoped to appease the discontented bonzes, and to shame his son into following the example of the other Christians, who would, he never doubted, gladly save their lives at the expense of their religion. No sooner, however, was the sentence published than the converts flocked in crowds to the church, as a sort of public protestation against any denial of their faith; and Don Lewis himself took his station in the porch, thus encouraging them to martyrdom both by words and example. Father Valignan preached to them from the pulpit on the same subject; and when he told them of the martyrs of the primitive Church, their enthusiasm was excited to such a pitch, that, as if with one voice, all that mighty multitude exclaimed, "they would die in the cause." The very children shared in the general enthusiasm; and, dressed in their best apparel, they in-

sisted on remaining in the church, hoping thus to attain with their parents to the honours of martyrdom. One little fellow clung to his mother, crying, "Do not die without me, for I also will go to heaven;" and another told Father Valignan, "that if the soldiers sought to kill him first, he would place himself betwixt them and the father, so that they could not pierce the one without destroying the other."

When the king heard that Don Lewis was with the other Christians in the church, he was sorely puzzled; for he neither dared to put his former threats into execution, lest his own son should be involved in the massacre, nor yet could he allow his authority to be thus set at defiance with impunity. He was still wavering between the two extremes, when Father Valignan stood at the foot of his throne to plead the Christians' cause, and like the good shepherd of the gospel, to offer his own life for that of his flock. He told the king that if the Christians indeed were criminal for adoring one true God and one only, he must be much more guilty for having induced them to do so; and therefore he prayed his majesty to be content with his life, and to spare the blood of his own subjects and children, whom he would always find the foremost to obey him, so long as nothing was demanded against God and their conscience. The king was much touched by this generous proposal; but he had not the strong mind of a Bartholomew to decide for himself, and therefore laid the matter before the council of his nobles. Happily they also were struck with admiration at the magnanimity of the father; and courage being prized by them above all other virtues, they unanimously resolved not to condemn a man who had thus fearlessly offered to sacrifice his life for the good of the people. No one was better pleased with this decision than the king himself; and thus encouraged by his nobles, and naturally inclined to mercy, he rescinded his late edict against the Christians, and peace and joy were restored to the kingdom.

His son soon afterwards succeeded him on the

throne, and no further religious persecution took place at Goto until after the death of that prince, an event only too speedily followed by those imperial edicts issued at Miako, beneath which the entire fabric of the Christian Church, so recently given to Japan, was destined to be then, and to this very hour, totally submerged.

CHAPTER IV.

Deaths of Fathers Torres and Villela. Father Cabral appointed Superior of the Missions. In Omura Christianity is formally recognised as the religion of the State. Conversion of the second son and the nephew of the King of Bongo. The Queen threatens to murder the Fathers. Conversion of the King, who abdicates in favour of his son. Conversion of the King of Arima. An embassy to the Pope is determined upon.

WHILE Christianity was making gradual progress at Miako under the protection of Nobunanga, and was yet more rapidly becoming the dominant religion in other kingdoms of the country, beneath the faith or favour of their respective monarchs, each and all of these flourishing missions were destined to sustain a heavy blow, in the death of him to whom they might almost be said to have owed their existence; for if St. Francis Xavier has won the title of its founder, surely Father Torres may as emphatically be styled the nursing-father of the young Church of Japan. During the twenty years and upwards which he laboured in that country, he had united the austere virtues of an anchorite with the active labours of a missionary's life; making his innumerable journeys barefoot, even in the depth of winter, and never in all that length of years using any other food than roots and herbs, or rice boiled in water. But he who had baptised 30,000 infidels with his own hand, who had founded fifty churches, besides many seminaries and colleges for the better dissemination of the faith, had long been sinking beneath the labours which these multifarious offices entailed, and the austerity of life by which they had been accompanied. Year after year he had written to Rome, imploring a successor in the conduct of the missions; and when at length, in 1570, Father Cabral landed at Sequi in that capacity, the

saintly old man whom he superseded could only say again, as he had said before, on another but scarcely to him more joyful occasion, "Now, Lord, Thou dost dismiss Thy servant, according to Thy word, in peace." And in peace indeed he went, with the thoughts of the thousands he had given to God to gild the memories of the past, and shed a glowing glory on his eternal future; at a moment, too, when the star of the Church of Japan was at its brightest, and before one of its rays had been quenched in that sea of blood in which all its beauty and its radiance were destined finally to set. Heaven in its mercy took him to his rest while yet religion was tolerated at Miako, and more than tolerated, even cherished and supported, by the monarch of Bongo; when Omura had almost declared itself Christian, and Arima and Goto only awaited a favourable moment to do the same. With the prospect before him of successes such as these to crown the cause for which he had toiled and suffered, lived and died, surely the prayer of his heart must have been fulfilled, and his end must have been full of peace. He was taken ill only a few weeks after the arrival of his successor,—as if he had but waited that event for the consummation of his own sacrifice; and having prepared himself by a general confession for the reception of the last sacraments, he was carried from the church, where the holy viaticum had been administered, to his chamber,—there, amid the tears and lamentations of his religious, to yield his pure soul to God, on the 2d of October, 1570. He was buried at Sequi, where he died, and his panegyric was preached by Father Villela; but perhaps his best eulogium may be found in the fact, that of all the Jesuit College at Goa, every one of whose members had offered themselves to accompany St. Francis, the Saint had singled out Father Torres as the most worthy to share in the merits and labours of the new mission of Japan. His death had been preceded about four years by that of John Fernandez, the brother chosen by St. Francis as his second associate in the enterprise, and to whom the Japanese

Church was nearly as much indebted for its early progress and prosperity; and it was followed a few months afterwards by that of Father Villela, who had been recalled from Japan only to expire in India, exhausted by labour even more than by years.

Father Cabral commenced his mission as Superior by a general visitation of the several churches, going first to Miako, and from thence to Mino, where Nobunanga, then at the zenith of his greatness, received him with courtesy and kindness. From Mino he passed on to Facata, and from thence to Amanguchi, the Christians of both places hailing his arrival with exceeding delight. The inhabitants of the latter city were among the first converts of St. Francis Xavier; and though it was full twenty years since they had even seen a priest, they had preserved in all their original freshness and fervour the sentiments of religion they had imbibed from their teacher. Being without any suitable building as a public church, a private chapel had been arranged in the house of one of the faithful, and here they assembled every Sunday and holiday for prayer, pious reading, and the collecting of alms for the relief of the poor; and it is well worthy of observation, that under God much of this happy state of things was owing to the diligent exertions of a poor blind man, who, as he earned his bread by playing the flute from door to door, had many opportunities both of kindling the faith in hearts where as yet it had no existence, or of rekindling it in those where it had begun to grow cold. Many others, poor like himself in all but charity and faith, were associated with him in this labour of love; and as an instance of the wonderful blessing which attended their efforts in the cause of religion, Father Cabral tells us of a nobleman who came to be baptised during this very visitation, and who frankly acknowledged that he owed his conversion to the instructions of a poor man, an itinerant vendor of combs and needles Matthew, for this was the name of the comb-selling Christian, made it a point of conscience to discourse

upon religion in every house which he visited with his wares; and this nobleman, happening to hear him one day speaking on the subject, was so much struck by the force of his reasoning, that on his return home he immediately cast all his idols into the fire. His friends were greatly alarmed, for they thought he must be mad; but, with a surer instinct, the bonzes guessed that he was about to become a Christian, and made their complaint to the governor of the city. Fortunately the governor was no friend of the bonzes; for he only laughed at their indignation, and dismissed the accused with a friendly admonition to do his duty by the state, whatever might chance to be his religious opinions.

Numbers of similar or still more extraordinary conversions occurred both before and during Father Cabral's residence at Amanguchi; nor had he less cause to be satisfied with the progress which religion was making in the kingdom of Omura. It is true, indeed, that Bartholomew had only just succeeded in quelling a second insurrection, less formidable than the first, yet having its origin in the same inveterate hatred of the Christian religion; but never for a moment had he wavered in the faith, or lost trust in himself or confidence in God. "Now we shall conquer," he exclaimed, on hearing that the rebels had set fire to a church; "for they make war upon God, not upon us. Now we shall conquer." And so, indeed, it proved. The rebellion was completely crushed; and, more powerful than ever, Bartholomew went publicly to meet Father Cabral, and to conduct him in triumph to the capital of his kingdom. A less resolute character might have been deterred by these repeated insurrections from any further prosecution of his designs; but Bartholomew only found in them fresh motives for promoting the interests of Almighty God, to whose especial interposition he attributed his victories. No sooner, therefore, was he reinstated on his throne, than, assembling the great council of the nation, he told them without any circumlocution

that it was his will that all the idols in his dominions should be destroyed; for that he should be the most ungrateful of creatures, if he any longer permitted such an insult to be offered to God, after the signal protection he had just received at His hands. The princes readily agreed to the proposal; and thus Omura was the first kingdom in Japan where Christianity was formally recognised as the religion of the state, and idolatry altogether abolished. A magnificent church was built in memory of this event; and after Father Cabral had baptised the queen and the remaining members of the royal family, he returned to Bongo, whither he had been recalled by a special messenger from court.

Though the king of that country had hitherto always refused to become a Christian; though he had studiously absented himself from the public instructions of the fathers, and had even resolutely applied himself to the study of the different sects among the bonzes (in hopes, as he afterwards acknowledged, of finding sufficient reason among them to preclude the necessity of changing his creed),—yet he had never ceased to favour the progress of the Christian religion throughout his dominions, nor withdrawn that protection from the missionaries which, from his friendship for St. Francis, he had accorded in the beginning. Even when he himself, during the earlier part of their residence at Funay, was driven from thence by an insurrection of his lords, and the fathers who remained in the city did so at the peril of their lives, being openly threatened with death by the bonzes of the victorious party, yet he did not forsake them. If he could no longer protect them, at least he did what he could to show his feelings in their favour by repeated messages of sympathy and kindness; and no sooner had he regained possession of the city, than, utterly regardless of popular opinion, he went at once to the Jesuit College, and invited himself to celebrate his triumph by dining with the fathers. The result of such an intimacy might easily have been foreseen: though he himself had not yet resolved upon

changing his religion, others of his family were more open to conviction; and when, according to the custom of the country, he wished his second son to become a bonze, the young prince indignantly refused, alleging that he was a Christian in heart already, and would sooner die than be made a partaker in the hypocrisy of that idolatrous priesthood. The queen, whose hatred of every thing Christian had won her the *sobriquet* of Jezabel the second, was furious; but the king was far less angry than perplexed. He had already built a magnificent monastery, and set aside vast revenues for the maintenance of the future bonze; and more than all, he felt that his people would look to him for the enforcement of the law. Yet he loved his son most passionately; and having the highest opinion of the Christian code of morality, he was satisfied that should the boy become a Christian, he would in all probability be far more submissive to his elder brother (the state reason for making him a bonze) than if compelled against his will to enter the priesthood of a religion in which he no longer believed. Accordingly, Father Cabral was recalled from Omura, the young prince was intrusted to his care for instruction, and not very long after he was publicly baptised in the church at Vosuqui, the king his father being present at the ceremony, and remaining uncovered and on his knees during the whole of the service; after which he celebrated the event the same evening by a magnificent banquet. But the queen was implacable. She sent her son word that he must no longer consider himself as her child, forbidding him even to appear in her presence; but Sebastian (for this was the name the young prince had taken in baptism) only answered, "That he was indeed grieved at her resolution; but that he trusted the Mother of God would henceforth supply her place, so that he should certainly be no loser by the change."

The conversion of one so young in years and so high in rank made a deep impression, and was speedily followed by many other conversions, both among the

native nobility and the royal princes of the adjoining kingdoms. Most of the former were men of Sebastian's own age, and the city was soon edified by the visible change which took place in their manners. The better to keep alive this their first zeal and fervour, the fathers formed about fifty of them into a congregation under the name and title of our Blessed Lady. They met every Sunday and holiday for devotional purposes; after which they held a kind of debating society, disputing for and against the Christian religion, and using for this purpose all the objections and sophistries of the bonzes. By this means they soon acquired so great a facility in answering the arguments of their opponents, that it was said none of the latter would enter the lists against them; and when the king's eldest son put this to the test by setting several of the most learned of the bonzes to argue with his own Christian page, he was obliged to confess, though a heathen himself, that the latter had won the day.

The queen's vexation at the conversion of her son was greatly increased by that of her adopted nephew, which followed almost immediately afterwards. The son of a nobleman at Miako, this young man had early been adopted by her brother Chicata, and in this position had so entirely won the esteem both of the queen and her husband, that they were on the point of giving him one of their daughters in marriage, when he revealed his intention of becoming a Christian. At first Chicata made no opposition; but urged at length by the fury of the queen, he took advantage of the absence of the king on a hunting expedition to send for the youth, and gave him his choice,—either to renounce Christianity, or to return to his private station at Miako. Most perfect was the spirit of self-sacrifice in which this worldly-minded proposition was met by his adopted son. "He was grieved," he said, "at the sorrow of his father. Fear of this very thing had too long withheld him from an earlier declaration of his feelings. But now, if it needs must be, he was ready to renounce all;—the af-

fection of his father, a marriage and position which princes might have envied, and to return to the poor and lowly lot from whence he had been taken; for no worldly happiness or advantage could be put in competition with his duty to his God." But having said thus much in vindication of his conscience, Chicatora implored his father in the most tender and affectionate terms not to drive him from his side, but rather, like a true parent, to prefer his eternal interests to those which were merely temporal, by asserting his right to choose for himself in a matter which related solely to the former; and he concluded this touching address by a solemn promise that on all other subjects his father should receive from him even more than the duty and obedience of a child. Chicata was moved by these generous sentiments; but his sister leaving him little choice, Chicatora was sent to prison, and carefully excluded from all communication with the Jesuit fathers. Notwithstanding their vigilance, however, Father Cabral contrived to send him a letter, exhorting him to perseverance; and by the same means Chicatora conveyed him an answer, expressive of his sorrowful anxiety lest he should die, or be put to death, without having had the happiness of being baptised. For a while he was left in prison; but afterwards the queen and her brother recalled him to court, where they did their utmost to compensate by indulgence for the ill-treatment he had hitherto received at their hands; nay, in the hope of shaking his resolution, they, with the most cruel ingenuity, tried each opposite method in turn; one while tempting him to despair by renewed severities, at another endeavouring to seduce him from his fidelity by the allurements of criminal pleasure.

One day, while thus at liberty and exposed to the last and far more dangerous temptation—that of sensual indulgence, he rushed to Father Cabral, conjuring him by all that was sacred no longer to defer his baptism; and the father, feeling indeed that in such a perilous position he would not be justified in refusing

a grace which was so much needed and so urgently asked for, at once complied with his request. It was the eve of St. Mark, but Chicatora was baptised by the name of Simon, which in Chinese signifies "instructed by a master." In the excess of his joy, he transgressed the bounds of prudence by appearing at court immediately afterwards with a rosary, as a kind of profession of faith, suspended from his neck. The queen took fire at this open defiance of her will; Simon was once more sent to prison; and Chicata went to Father Cabral, imploring him to persuade the boy to conceal his religion for a while, promising, in his own name and in that of the queen, all sorts of favours in case of compliance, and threatening death to the fathers and destruction to their churches if they refused. To all this Father Cabral answered, "That he would rather shed the last drop of his blood, and see every Christian church in the kingdom reduced to ashes, than counsel or sanction so impious a treachery; that as to being allured by his promises or moved by his threats, the Jesuits had not left the riches and pleasures of Europe to seek those of Japan; voluntary poverty was the portion which they had chosen for themselves upon earth; their only real treasure was in heaven; and should he have a mind to put them in possession of that, he need not be at the trouble of assembling his troops, for that the fathers would always be found at home, both ready and willing to die the moment he signified his wishes to that effect."

Chicata retired in a great fury; and, fully believing that he meant to put his threats into execution, Father Cabral assembled his brethren in church, there solemnly to offer to God the sacrifice of their lives whenever He should choose to demand it at their hands. His anticipation proved correct. Chicata almost immediately afterwards ordered out his troops, giving them an especial warrant for the massacre of the fathers; but rumours of his proceedings had already gone through the city, and the church was speedily surrounded by a

body of Christian cavaliers, who came armed to the teeth to defend or to die with their spiritual fathers. The Jesuits would willingly have declined their assistance; but to every remonstrance the high-spirited soldiers only replied, "that they were come, not to rob the fathers of the crown of martyrdom, but to share it with them; that the king not being there to decide between them, and Chicata being a mere private individual like themselves, they neither could nor would allow him to insult with impunity God and His Church."

It was vain to oppose them, so they were suffered to remain at the post which they had chosen; but by this time the same enthusiasm had spread far and wide throughout the city, and at an early hour of the night the watchers in the church were again disturbed by a loud knocking at the gates. No one doubted but that the enemy were come. The cavaliers sought their arms; the fathers prostrated themselves before the altar; but on opening the doors, the disturbers proved to be only a number of ladies of the highest rank, who had come as Christians to die with their fathers, brothers, and husbands in the church. Such an action would have been a wonderful display of courage and fidelity any where; but in Japan, where women are brought up in all the jealousy of eastern seclusion, thus to come in the darkness of the night, without attendants, and through unfrequented streets, in quest of martyrdom, showed a courage as marvellous to the heathen as it was edifying to the Christian, and which afterwards proved abundantly fruitful in the conversion of the former. Of course the fathers did what they could to induce them to go home; but with no better success than they had had with their lords. Sebastian, however, the king's son, they at last succeeded in persuading to retire; though he did so only with the intention of returning the instant the church should be attacked.

It is not told us whether Chicata repented of his hasty resolution of vengeance, or whether he was afraid of putting it into execution after these public demonstra-

tions; but it is certain that the assault which he contemplated never took place; and while vainly waiting for it, Sebastian contrived to have an interview with Simon. They met by appointment at a place outside the city, the royal prince coming to the interview with a train of noble cavaliers, the poor prisoner attended only by a couple of pages. They had long been united by the closest bonds of friendship; and the meeting of David and Jonathan, those matchless friends of Scripture, could hardly have been more affecting. Simon, who was still almost a boy, wept as he mourned over the severity of his father, and implored his friend, by the bonds of religion, the ties of friendship, and every thing he held sacred, to assist him in his miserable condition. Sebastian promised all; and then they parted, the one to his voluntary prison, and the other to the palace. There, with the lament of Simon yet ringing in his ears, Sebastian spoke so openly and vehemently of the cruelty practised on his friend, that, between vexation and alarm, the queen and her brother despatched a messenger to the king, accusing the fathers of having induced the people to conspire against him, and to set Sebastian on the throne in his stead.

The young prince hearing of this, thought it necessary to go to his father, both for his own justification and that of the Jesuits; on his arrival, however, at the king's hunting-ground, the latter assured him that all explanation was unnecessary, since he knew too well the good conduct of the fathers to believe any thing evil against them. On the other hand, the only answer which he vouchsafed to the messenger of his queen was couched in the shape of a stern rebuke to her brother, whom he commanded instantly to release Simon from prison and restore him to the palace; for that, if Chicata rejected him as a child, he, the king, would still continue to acknowledge him as a nephew and a son.

The intelligence conveyed by this double embassy caused the king to return almost immediately to Vosuqui, for the purpose of enforcing obedience to his orders;

but the queen still persisted in refusing her consent to the marriage of Simon with her daughter; and weary of her obstinacy, the king, who was at length resolved to have his own way in the matter, sent Simon for present protection to the Jesuits at Funay, and then proceeded to settle all his domestic disputes by means of a divorce.

Our readers are already aware that this was no very difficult affair in Japan. His majesty had merely to choose another wife, and then send a command to the ex-queen to depart from the palace. So secretly had the whole affair been managed, that she was utterly ignorant of the second marriage of her spouse, until drums and trumpets announced it to the city; and she was rejoicing in her triumph at having expelled Simon from the court, when the royal messenger arrived with the tidings of her own disgrace.

From that moment peace was restored both to the king and the kingdom, and the progress of the former towards the Christian religion became marked and decided. The new queen and her daughter, who was espoused to Sebastian, were already catechumens; and by his majesty's desire, Father Cabral attended every day at the palace to give them further instructions. He himself was always present at these lectures; and it was soon observed, first, that he had begun to fast every Friday and Saturday; then, that he said the rosary every day; and at last, that certain little idols, towards which he had always hitherto testified the utmost devotion, had been destroyed by his orders. Still his ultimate intentions remained untold, until one day, calling one of the Jesuit brothers into his chamber, he declared that, if he had not hitherto become a Christian, it was not from want of willingness or of devotion, but that he had thought it his duty first to search into all the sects of his native land, to discover if aught like the truth was to be found among them; that the deeper he had penetrated into their mysteries, the less had he found to content the conscience or satisfy the soul;

that this seemed to him to be the prerogative of the Catholic Church alone, and therefore he was resolved to become a Christian; but in order to do so without disturbing the peace of the kingdom, he had determined to abdicate in favour of his eldest son. Then, as if this open declaration had all at once kindled the desires of his soul beyond the power of restraint, he bade the brother hasten Father Cabral to the palace; and no sooner had the latter made his appearance than, standing humbly in the midst of his court, he demanded baptism at his hands, adding that he would take the name of Francis, since he felt sure he owed to the prayers of that departed Saint his present anxiety to become a Christian. Father Cabral warned him, that when once he was received into the bosom of the Church he would no longer be permitted the liberty of divorce; to which the king only replied by taking an oath on the spot, that he would remain for ever faithful to her whom he had lately espoused. He was then solemnly baptised by the name of Francis, on the 28th of August, 1578, in the fiftieth year of his age. And so great was the change which instantaneously took place in his soul, that he, who for twenty-seven years had been himself constantly vibrating between truth and error, now, as he left the church, could not refrain from tears at the sight of his idolatrous subjects, nor avoid expressing a somewhat *naïve* astonishment that any one could hear of the true God, and not hasten at once to worship and adore Him.

In his eagerness to cultivate to the utmost the talent which he had received, he lost no time in resigning the government into the hands of his son, and in hastening the preparations for his own departure from Bongo. He had chosen himself a residence in the adjoining province of Jugo, where he intended to build a town, which should be inhabited solely by Christians, and should be governed by laws of a very different character from those of Japan. His arrangements for this purpose being at length completed, he left Vosuqui to take

possession of his new abode on the feast-day of his patron, the holy father St. Francis; and such was the joy and exultation of his soul, that his journey seemed rather the progress of a victorious monarch than the departure of one who had abdicated his throne. Banners and streamers of snow-white damask, embroidered with crosses of red and gold, floated from the masts of the galley in which he sailed, and all the vessels of the little fleet that followed were gaily adorned in a similar fashion.

His son accompanied him to the frontiers of the kingdom, and then they parted; King Francis pursuing his way quietly to Jugo, and the prince returning to Vosuqui, there to assume the heavy yoke of a despotic government over a fickle and uncertain people. He had listened to his father's parting admonitions with every appearance of respect and submission, and showed himself in the beginning both anxious and willing to follow in his footsteps. No sooner was he properly inaugurated into his new dignity, than he presented a house and college to the fathers, and put himself under their instructions for baptism; though he delayed the actual reception of that sacrament until he should have succeeded in conciliating certain lords of the infidel party,—an arrangement to which his father, when consulted on the subject, very willingly assented, having probably a more intimate knowledge of his son's real disposition than the young man had as yet acquired for himself.

The baptism of King Francis, and the anticipated conversion of his son, were the first intelligence which greeted Father Valignan, when, in 1579, he once more landed at Cochinotzu, as visitor-general of the missions of Japan; but his joy in these happy events was soon clouded by grief for the misfortunes which fell upon both princes, and the faithlessness which was thereby elicited in one.

Taking advantage of the abdication of its monarch, and of the discontent of the infidel party, the King of

Satzuma declared war upon Bongo; and Jugo, the province King Francis had reserved for himself, was the first object of his attack. Chicata was deputed to make head against the enemy, which he did at first with considerable success; but, grown careless by repeated victories, he at length suffered himself to be taken at a disadvantage, and notwithstanding the prodigies of valour by which he and his adopted son endeavoured to retrieve the fortunes of the day, it was irrevocably lost. For one brief instant, indeed, Simon had almost succeeded in turning the tide of battle in their favour; but from the vantage-ground which he had gained, he saw his father struggling amidst a number of enemies, wounded and worn out by the fatigues of the fray; and forgetful of every thing else, the son of his love and his adoption fought his way sword in hand back to the spot, succeeded in bringing him to a place of comparative safety, and then, covered with wounds, fell dead at his feet. Maddened at this sight, Chicata rushed once more into the midst of the fight, seeking a death which he was not destined to find; for though wounded and carried as dead from the field, he finally recovered, and lived to experience that sense of disgrace which is the keenest torture of a haughty mind, and which in Japan ever attaches itself to the idea of defeat.

King Francis was now obliged to abandon Jugo and retreat to Vosuqui. The bonzes every where proclaimed the indignation of their idols as the cause of these disasters, and for a moment the fathers almost feared that such might be their effect on the feelings of the king himself; their apprehensions, however, were quite groundless, for, on the contrary, he met this sudden reverse of fortune with the constancy of a great mind and the submission of a good one. "Happen what may," he said, "I have become a Christian, never to change. God only knows the manner of life which I had traced out for myself at Jugo; but since He has willed it otherwise, it is for Him to command,

and for me to obey." After his arrival at Vosuqui, full of these heroic sentiments of self-sacrifice, he applied himself more diligently than ever to the care of his salvation, drawing the ties of religion yet closer around him, in proportion as he felt himself loosened from those of earth. Night and morning he made a meditation on the Passion of his Lord, and said the beads daily in public with his family; he confessed and communicated every week, and his fasts and austerities became so frequent and severe, that the fathers ventured to remonstrate with him on the subject; but he silenced them by replying, "that for the very reason they alleged, and because he was old and declining towards the grave, it was needful for him to make the most of his time, by giving good example to his subjects, and doing penance for the sins and enormities of his past life."

While the abdicated monarch thus adhered to his principles with a constancy which showed how entirely he had "counted the cost" before he embraced them, his son weakly and shamefully abandoned the faith without a single effort to defend it. The lords of the infidel party had refused to march against the enemy until he had sworn by the Kami and Chadotschi to restore the ancient worship of the kingdom; and in a moment of fear and infatuation he consented to take the oath.

The apostasy availed him little: the King of Satzuma carried every thing before him; and the prince was driven from province to province, and from city to city, until his monarchy of only a few months' standing was almost entirely wrested out of his hands in the same number of days. Nothing could exceed the anguish of King Francis at this terrible news. It was not the disgrace which had fallen upon his arms, nor the cities which had been lost to the enemy, nor the empire which, after having, with a fortune unparalleled in Japanese history, retained its integrity for full thirty years, he now saw shivered to pieces,—it was the perfidy of his son which cut him to the quick, and caused him in the privacy of his own chamber, un-

prompted by the fathers, or by aught save the faith and firmness of his own heart, to make a solemn vow to God, "that though even the Jesuit who had brought him to the knowledge of His holy name should renounce it, and though the Christians of Europe should cast it forth from their hearts, and though (which he believed to be impossible) the Pope, the head and guardian of the faith, should prove a traitor to his trust, and deny it, yet would he himself, standing alone in the midst of the ruins of Christendom, continue to confess, acknowledge, and adore Him, the one true God and Creator of the universe, even as at that very moment he confessed, acknowledged, and adored Him, without doubt or hesitation as to a single article of the creed which had been proposed to his acceptance."

The displeasure of his father, and the ill-success of his own plan of expediency, made a deep impression on the prince; but, dispirited and ashamed, it was some time before he could bring himself either to disavow his act, or to seek the presence of King Francis. Matters, however, soon became so desperate, that no other course was left him than to solicit the assistance of the latter; and the old king once more took the reins of government into his own hands. He left his retreat very unwillingly; but once having done so, he brought all his old wonted energy and decision to bear upon the crisis: he banished the lords whose evil counsel had so nearly ruined his son, reunited the scattered elements of the army, drove the Satzumans beyond the frontiers, and having thus restored peace to the kingdom, and the kingdom to his son, retired again to his private residence at Vosuqui.

The prince, on his part, taught by sad experience, not only expressed unbounded contrition for the past, but promised on all future occasions to guide himself entirely by the advice of his father; and precisely at the moment when this reconciliation was effected between them, Father Valignan returned from his tour of inspection, in the course of which the young king of

Arima had followed the example of his father and uncle by becoming a Christian. Indeed, such abundant evidence of the rapid progress of Christianity had every where greeted the eyes of the Father-Visitor, that he purposed going to the Pope, and representing to him the spiritual necessities of the country, as to both pastors and seminaries, in the missions committed to his care. No sooner were his intentions made public, than the two kings of Bongo, with those of Arima and Omura (Lewis of Goto was already dead), resolved to add a solemn embassy of their own, for the purpose of laying at the feet of his Holiness the homage and obedience of the Christian kings of Japan.

CHAPTER V.

Two Japanese princes and two nobles start with Father Valignan for Rome. Their arrival at Goa, at Lisbon, at Madrid, and finally at Rome. Their reception by the Pope. Their return to Japan. Important changes during their absence. Death of Nobunanga. His successor begins to persecute the Christians. Death of King Francis and King Bartholomew. Exile of Justo Ucondono. Decree for the banishment of the Jesuits.

THREE-and-thirty years had now elapsed since St. Francis Xavier, with his one Japanese convert, Paul de St. Foi, had landed at Kangoxima; and the result of Father Valignan's visit of inspection sufficiently proved that in this short period the number of Christians had increased to 150,000, while the Jesuits had probably not a hundred religious of their order to meet the spiritual wants of this vast multitude,—scattered as it was at wide intervals throughout the country,—still less to follow up any of those providential circumstances which continually invited them to the formation of new missions.

With Christianity rapidly progressing in the country, the Father-Visitor saw at once, that no importation of foreign missionaries could ever be made sufficiently large and continuous to supply the demand; he therefore conceived the idea of forming a native priesthood, from which the ranks of the Europeans might be occasionally recruited in the beginning, and by which, in the end, their necessity would be altogether superseded.

A proper foundation for seminaries and colleges was the first essential towards carrying out this plan; the second was a resident bishop, by whom native students could be ordained, without the risk of life or loss of time and money which rendered the supply from the Indies so difficult and precarious. Reference to Rome was

needed for this last condition; and Father Valignan immediately perceived that the intended embassy would add an incalculable weight of evidence to any representations which he could himself make on the subject. Both he and all the other fathers felt that the actual presence of these foreign princes would give the Pope and their religious brethren of Europe a better idea of the importance of the kingdom which had been added to the Church, than any mere verbal description could convey; while, on the other hand, they thought it by no means undesirable that the Japanese, who considered themselves to be, next to the Chinese, the greatest and wisest nation in the world, should learn something of the wisdom and greatness of the countries from whence their new code of religion was derived.

For both these reasons, then, he willingly undertook the somewhat onerous charge of the embassy, which was intended to consist of two young princes, Mancio, nephew and representative of Francis, king of Bongo, and Michael, who went in the name, and under the authority, of Arima and Omura. To these were subsequently added two other nobles, Julian and Martin, none of the four being more than sixteen years of age, but wise and prudent, we are told—as indeed their subsequent conduct sufficiently proved—beyond their years. It happened, unfortunately, that all these ambassadors had lost their fathers; and who could blame their mothers if, terrified at the prospect of so long and perilous a voyage over tempestuous seas, and to an unknown people, living in countries distant, in their ideas, as the farthest ends of the earth, they did all in their power to dissuade their sons from the proposed undertaking. The day of their departure was indeed a day of lamentation and sorrow. The poor mothers wept over their sons as if they had already lost them; and though Father Valignan did what he could to re-assure them, they still remained inconsolable, and he felt that their grief and desolation doubled his responsibilities in the safeguard of their sons.

It had been previously arranged that, in order to facilitate their journey, and escape the observation of pirates, who abounded in those unfrequented seas, they should travel without any such train as would otherwise have befitted their rank. Father Valignan therefore took only a few of their pages, with a Jesuit father and brother, to assist them on their voyage; and thus attended, they sailed from Nangasaki on the 25th of February, 1582. Their faith and courage were destined to be severely tried; for even in the commencement of their voyage they were overtaken by a tremendous storm, which for seven days and seven nights kept them in hourly expectation of shipwreck and death. Father Valignan was sorely distressed on their account, and divided his time between prayer to God, who alone could deliver them from this imminent peril, and endeavours by counsel and exhortation to prepare the youthful travellers for the worst that might befal them. That worst, however, never came; but though the tempest ceased, they still had to encounter innumerable other difficulties and dangers before they succeeded in reaching Goa. There they were received by the Portuguese viceroy of the Indies with all imaginable courtesy and kindness; nor was this favourable feeling in their regard confined in its exhibition to the palace, for they were welcomed to the city by universal public rejoicings. The archbishop showed them every fatherly attention in his power; and the Jesuit fathers sent a deputation of their scholars to congratulate them on their arrival,—a compliment with which the young ambassadors appear to have been particularly delighted.

It was not yet the season for the departure of the European ships; and while awaiting that event, the Japanese princes took up their abode at the Jesuit College, where they learned, to their infinite disappointment, that Father Valignan would be unable to accompany them further, having been appointed provincial of the Indies during his absence in Japan. Father Rodriguez, however, had been named to conduct them to Rome in

his stead, and they soon became as much attached to him as they had hitherto been to his predecessor. The viceroy himself selected the best and strongest vessel which sailed from Goa that year for their passage; and besides a magnificent gold chain and reliquary which he presented to each, he placed three thousand crowns at their disposal for the expenses of their journey. The voyage to Europe proved as fortunate as that to the Indies had been the contrary; and without any adventure worth recording, they cast anchor in the Tagus on the 10th of August, 1584, just two years after their departure from Nangasaki.

Intelligence of their approach had already been conveyed by one of the fast-sailing vessels of the Indian fleet; and Lisbon was prepared to receive them in the most magnificent manner. From motives of prudence, however, Father Valignan had forbidden any public demonstration in their honour at first; and, worn out by the fatigues of their long voyage, the princes themselves were only too glad to take refuge from all ceremonial in the professed house of the Jesuits. The morning after their arrival they waited on Cardinal Albert, the governor of the kingdom, to whom they presented a cup of horn, fashioned in their own country, and richly set in silver. The few following days were spent in examining all that was most superb in the way of churches and palaces that the city could boast of; and then from Lisbon they went to Ebora to visit the archbishop. It chanced to be the feast of the Exaltation of the Cross, and he invited them to assist at the ceremonies in his church. Immense multitudes flocked hither to behold them; and when they entered the sacred building the whole congregation burst into tears of joy to see them bow down before the altar,—ambassadors as they were from a heathen nation, and sent hither in its name and at its bidding, to acknowledge before heaven and earth the universal sovereignty of the one true God.

The next point of interest in their travels was Ma-

drid. Philip II. received them in the midst of his family, embracing them affectionately, and bidding his children do the same. As they had arrived at the palace about the time of evensong, he invited them to attend it in the royal chapel, and they were seated directly in front of the altar, "in order," says the old historian, "that the court might have a good view of their persons;" but rather, we may be allowed to hope, that they might themselves have a good view of the altar. By the king's orders they were afterwards taken to see every thing most worthy of notice in Madrid and its environs,—the Escurial, the arsenal, the treasure-rooms, with their incalculable wealth of jewels, &c. &c.; and on their final departure for Italy, Philip came in person to take leave of them at the college, his royal munificence following them even to the port from whence they were to sail, their journey through the rest of his dominions being made entirely at his expense, and the largest vessel in his fleet having been fitted out by his orders for their voyage. Their passage through Italy was one triumphant progress from beginning to end, until, wearied out by all these stately honours, the young princes literally pined for the moment when, at the feet of Gregory XIII., they should have accomplished the real object of their travels. That Pontiff himself, who seems to have had some forebodings of his approaching death, was not less anxious for their arrival; but impatient as all parties were, the strangers were compelled to travel slowly, on account of the illness of one of their number. They were still at two days' journey from the city, when the general of the Roman forces met them with several troops of cavalry for their escort; but as they were anxious (probably from motives of devotion) to make their entrance as privately as possible, they preferred doing so by night, and without any attendance.

The precaution availed them little; all Rome was eagerly awaiting their arrival; multitudes met them even at the gates, and conducted them in triumph to

the professed house of the Jesuits, where the general Claudius Acqua Viva, at the head of 200 of the society, was ready to receive them.

They were led directly to the church, and the *Te Deum* was intoned, the ambassadors remaining prostrate at the foot of the altar; nor could Julian, ill as he was, be induced to retire; so anxious were they, one and all, to thank God for this happy and perhaps almost unlooked-for fulfilment of their enterprise.

The Jesuits would have preferred introducing them to the Pope in private; but finding that they came as accredited agents from the kings of Japan, Gregory chose rather to give them a public reception, with all the honours usually accorded to the ambassadors of crowned heads. The day after their arrival was accordingly fixed upon for the ceremony, and Julian insisted on joining the procession. He had not proceeded far, however, before, becoming too weak to sit on horseback, he would have been compelled to return, had not a nobleman taken him into his carriage, and driven him at once to the Vatican. Gregory received him with the most fatherly expressions of tenderness and joy, giving him his benediction over and over again; and finally succeeded in prevailing on him to retire before the commencement of the Consistory, promising that he would call another as soon as he should be sufficiently recovered to attend it.

The rest of the ambassadors were met at the vineyard of Pope Julius II. (the spot from whence all great ceremonies commenced in those days) by the Bishop of Imola, who came thither to compliment them on the part of the Pope. A procession was then formed by the light troops and Swiss guards leading the way, followed by the carriages of the Spanish, French, and Venetian ambassadors, and by all the Roman princes and nobles on horseback. Among these last rode the Japanese ambassadors, immediately preceded by the officers of the Pope's household. Mounted on magnificent chargers, and dressed in their native fashion, they formed, of

course, the principal object of attraction for the day. Nothing, we are told, could be more splendid than their attire, more grave and noble than their mien and bearing. Three long robes, one over the other, the ground of dazzling whiteness, embroidered with birds, flowers, and foliage, exquisitely wrought and of singular brilliancy in the colouring, were partially open in front, and crossed on the breast by a scarf of the same material, knotted behind in the fashion of a belt. Their feet were sandalled; their wide sleeves reached only to the elbow; and their swords and sabres, of the finest tempered steel, were richly encrusted, both sheath and handle, with pearls, precious stones, and figures variously designed in enamel. Their features were no less foreign and striking than their garments; but there was an innocence on each youthful brow, and a noble modesty in every look and attitude, which yet more effectually won for them the involuntary admiration of all beholders.

Mancio Ito, as chief of the embassy, rode first; and as the foot of his charger touched the Bridge of St. Angelo, the guns of the castle fired a salute. They were answered by those from the Vatican; and long ere the warlike echoes had died away, a strain of delicious music filled the air, and it was amid a flood of harmony that they drew bridle at last before the gates of the Vatican.

In the Sala Regia, and surrounded by his cardinals, Gregory XIII. was waiting to receive them; and prostrate before his Holiness, and holding the credentials of their respective monarchs each in his own hand, the ambassadors declared in a few and simple words the object of their mission, namely, to acknowledge, in the names of the kings of Japan, the Pope as Christ's vicar upon earth, and to tender to him their homage and obedience, as head of the Universal Church and pastor of all Christian people. They spoke, of course, in Japanese, and Father Mesquita acted as interpreter; but the sight of these stranger-princes, so young in years

yet so strong in faith, and the knowledge of the difficulties and dangers through which they had come, spoke a language that needed no translation. Moved almost to tears, the Pope, as they knelt to kiss his feet, raised and embraced them with so much affection, that they afterwards said they were more touched by his evident tenderness than by all the honours which they subsequently received.

These preliminaries over, they were conducted to a platform, where they stood with uncovered heads while the letters of their several chiefs, translated in like manner by Father Mesquita, were read to his Holiness; and an address, called an obedience, which was usual on similar occasions, was then spoken in their name by one of the fathers. After a gracious answer from the Pope, they were once more conducted to the foot of the throne, when they were saluted and embraced by the Cardinals present. Conversation was for some time carried on through the medium of their interpreter; and to the many questions put to them concerning their country and their travels, they answered with a wisdom and presence of mind absolutely marvellous in persons so young and unused to the ceremonies and scenes in which they thus suddenly found themselves the principal actors. They dined that day at the Vatican, and afterwards had a long and private interview with the Pope, who questioned them most minutely as to the state of Christianity in Japan; and more than once the good old man shed tears of joy at the rapid progress it had so evidently made. He promised a foundation for the seminary which Father Valignan had already commenced at Funay, assigning at once a revenue of 4000 crowns for that purpose. This was at a later interview, and was almost the last official act of the Pope, for only a few days afterwards it pleased God to call Gregory to Himself; but he thought of his dear Japanese to the last, and even an hour before his death sent a messenger to inquire after the health of young Julian. He was mourned by these poor strangers as they would

have mourned for a father; for they not only revered him as a spiritual superior, but had learned to love him as an earthly protector.

The new Pope, Sixtus V., did what he could to console them, by showing the same unvarying kindness they had received from his predecessor. By his order they were ranked with the other ambassadors when assisting at his coronation; and he not only promised a future bishop to the Church of Japan, but also confirmed the grant in favour of its seminaries, and added two thousand crowns to the four already set aside for that purpose by Gregory.

A sum of three thousand more was also assigned them for the personal expenditure of their journey homeward; and prior to their leaving Rome, Sixtus proposed to confer on them the knighthood of the Golden Spur, an honour which he thought would be particularly acceptable to princes of a warlike and chivalrous nation. Accordingly the ceremony took place on the eve of the Ascension, in the presence of all the foreign ambassadors and native nobility of Rome. The Pope himself presented the sword and girdle, the ambassadors of France and Spain buckled on the spurs; and then Sixtus, throwing the golden chain around their necks, gave a hearty embrace to the new knights, who thanked him for the favour he had conferred upon them, and pledged themselves solemnly to maintain the faith at the peril of their lives,—a pledge which, in the after-years of persecution, they all faithfully redeemed. Their last public appearance was in the Capitol, where the citizens of Rome, both princes and people, met to present them with the patricianship of the city, the patents to that effect being made out on coloured parchment, and stamped with a seal of gold.

Their progress back through Italy was made in much the same state as before. They were particularly pleased with Venice, which, with its magnificent palaces, churches, and public buildings of all descrip-

tions, its streets of water and crowds of gondolas, must have appeared to their eastern imaginations as a veritable creation of the talisman of the genii. Fifty of its senators, clad in their scarlet robes of office, were waiting to receive them and to conduct them in a barge, hung with crimson velvet, to the city; and after an interview with the doge, during which they presented him with a sword and dagger, the workmanship of their native land, they were taken to see the public buildings, the precious merchandise, and various manufactories of the queen of the Adriatic. Among these last they were particularly interested in the glass-works, that article being altogether unknown at that period in Japan. Short as was their stay in Venice, time was found to have their pictures taken; and these were afterwards hung up in the great hall of council, among the ducal rulers of the city. The annual procession also, which had been put off until after their arrival, was celebrated with more than ordinary magnificence in their honour. Among the historical representations exhibited on the occasion, they were wonderfully surprised and delighted to discover a picture of their own presentation to the Pope, which, having now become a fact of history, was made, by a delicate flattery on the part of the Venetian contrivers of the fête, to take a conspicuous place among the pageants of the day.

In the midst of all these pleasures and attentions, so fascinating and full of danger to the young, and so flattering to the feelings of a naturally proud and haughty people, the youthful princes, we are told, preserved a steadfast piety and modesty of demeanour which made them objects of real admiration to all who approached them. Grave and simple as ever, they pursued their way, pleased with the honours and grateful for the pleasures, but as undazzled by the one as they were uncontaminated by the other; contriving, even in the midst of the world, to lead the lives almost of religious; confessing and communicating every week,

and allowing neither business nor amusement to prevent their daily devotions and attendance at Mass, or their punctual examination of conscience at night.

Europe had now unrolled all her shining treasures to their eyes, and among her Catholic nations, making it a pleasure as well as a duty, had done (says an historian of those times) "the honours of the whole Christian world to them, as to the representatives of the infant Churches of the East;" so with hearts weary of wandering, and satiated with sight-seeing, yet filled to overflowing with the religious inspirations which they had gathered on the way, they prepared to return to their native land.

Lisbon was their point of departure, as it had been that of their arrival; and they were joined at Goa by Father Valignan, who would yield to no one the pleasure of restoring them to their parents, and who therefore accompanied them to Japan.

Many and unlooked-for were the changes which had taken place in that country during their absence; but the greatest and most unfortunate of all for the interests of Christianity was the death of Nobunanga. That proud and luxurious chief had gone on from one degree of prosperity to another, until, almost forgetting that he was man, he sought like Nabuchodonosor to be worshipped as God; and he who had formerly scouted the teaching of the bonzes, who had scorned their idolatries and set at nought their superstitions, now caused himself to be proclaimed the only Lord of Nature, and Creator of the Universe. A magnificent temple was built in his honour; thousands of the almost innumerable divinities of Japan were brought together to be grouped within it; and a stone, with the arms of Nobunanga engraved upon it, was set up in the midst, to which, as the representative of that monarch, and under the name of Xanthi, the adoration of the people was commanded to be paid. Not a Christian obeyed the summons; but on the day of inauguration vast multitudes of heathens flocked to the ceremony, which was

performed on a scale of extraordinary magnificence, the king's eldest son, and future possessor of his throne, being the first to do homage to the idol of his father.

This crime seems to have filled up the measure of his iniquities in the sight of Heaven, and to have brought his worldly greatness to a close. A conspiracy was soon afterwards formed against him; and, betrayed by one of his own creatures, he and his eldest son perished miserably in the conflict that ensued. Whether he died by his own hand, according to the ordinary custom of the Japanese under such circumstances, or whether he was consumed in the flames of his own palace, which the rebels burnt to the ground, has never been ascertained.

Faxiba, the general of his army, rose to avenge him, and by the aid of Justo Ucondono defeated the rebels; but instead of restoring the government to the children of the late monarch, he assumed it himself, under the title of the Cambacundono, or Sovereign Lord,—a dignity which had formerly been considered even more exalted than that of the Kumbo. Such political transitions were far too common to create much opposition; and being cunning as well as brave, Cambacundono soon found means of augmenting his authority, until it greatly exceeded the utmost which Nobunanga had ever possessed.

It is painful to have to record, that the ill-conduct of the young king of Bongo, tne degenerate son of King Francis, was the primary cause of this dangerous addition to a power already too great for the well-being of the empire. Instead of fulfilling his promise of becoming a Christian, he had not long been left in sole possession of his dominions before he began to lead a most dissolute life, falling from one criminal excess into another, until he concluded, not merely by persecuting the Christians, but, under a false imputation of treason, pursuing his brother Sebastian with a degree of barbarity which has left a too probable suspicion of fratricide attached to his name. The double scourge of pestilence and war was the terrible chastisement of his sin. A

plague broke out and laid desolate the land, while at the same time, the king of Satzuma invading his territories, the unlucky prince would have found himself once more disinherited, if Cambacundono had not interfered by sending an army under Simon Condera to his assistance. Simon was a zealous Christian, and he did not reinstate him on his throne without rebuking him severely for his wicked conduct; until, moved by his reproaches, or by those yet harder to bear of his own conscience, the restored prince made up his mind to become a Christian in earnest, and was accordingly baptised by the name of Constantine.

A second reconciliation with his father followed this event; the old man received him kindly, but his heart was utterly broken; he never thoroughly recovered this last disgraceful proof of his son's inconstant and dangerous disposition; and a slight illness, from which nothing serious was apprehended in the beginning, proved fatal to a constitution enfeebled by sorrow as much as by age. He died, as he had now for many years been living, in the purest sentiments of faith and devotion; never during his illness did he speak of any thing but God, the world appearing to be as completely blotted out of his memory as if all the days of his life had been spent in the desert. His demise had been preceded by that of Bartholomew, the first Christian king of Japan, who, faithful and fearless as he had ever been in his life, was not less heroic in the hour of death. "Who are these Sanchez and Linus?" he said to one of his attendants, who in the moment of his agony wished to speak to him of his sons. "Did I not forbid any one to talk to me save of Jesus and of Mary?" And with these sweet names upon his lips he expired, having previously addressed a moving exhortation to his children, "to be faithful to religion, obedient to their elder brother, and tender and affectionate to their mother in her declining years."

With these two princes, the peace of the Church may be said to have been buried. The power which

Cambacundono had both asserted and shown in restoring Constantine to his throne, led to a more unconditional submission of the other princes of Japan than had ever been given to their chief monarch before; and although this unlimited authority was not at first directed against the Christians, yet in the end it proved fatal to them, by constituting the private edict of the monarch the universal law of the land, whereas in former times it could scarcely have been put into execution in the different kingdoms without the approbation and assistance of their several rulers.

In the beginning of his reign, Cambacundono was far from being unfavourable to religion, and the chief officers of the emperor were most of them Christians; Justo Ucondono being governor of Tagatiki; Simon Condera, general of the army; and Augustin, a most zealous and distinguished convert, chief admiral of the fleet; many of the ladies of the queen's household, whom Cambacundono singularly respected for their virtue and modesty, were also Christian; and he was even heard to say that he would himself be a convert to the new religion, if it were but a little more indulgent to poor human nature. But the devil seldom allows his votaries to stop half-way in their career, and the "human nature" which prevented Cambacundono from embracing Christianity led him at last to oppose it with war to the knife.

Some Christian ladies of Arima refused to become the inmates of his seraglio; and the bonze who had undertaken this infamous commission, revenged himself for the scorn with which his proposition had been rejected, by representing the Christians in general as being in a state of revolt. By a refinement of malice, he pointed his insinuations more especially against Justo, as being one of their principal leaders; and the governor of Tagatiki instantly received an imperial command to renounce his religion, or to retire from the kingdom. "Tell the Cambacundono," said the noble Christian, "that Justo is ready to lay down his office and

his life, but he dare not forget his allegiance to his God." This was enough for a jealous and despotic king; Justo's government was given away on the spot, and he prepared to leave the country a beggar and an exile. The banishment of a nobleman is generally accompanied in Japan by that of every other member of his family, except in the case of Christians, who could always escape the penalty by renouncing the faith. When, therefore, Justo went to acquaint his father with the sentence which had been pronounced against them, the old man lifted up his hands and eyes to heaven, thanking God for having chosen them to be the first examples of fidelity in His service, adding that only one thing more was to be desired or prayed for, namely, that they might all have the happiness likewise of shedding their blood in the cause. Both the wife and children of Justo shared in these heroic sentiments; the Christian officers of his household also, while they wept over his sentence, besought permission to share it with him; but this their lord declined, urging them, on the contrary, to retain their service under the emperor, since any defection from it would only confirm his suspicions of the loyalty of the Christians. The very heathens lamented the misfortunes of this good man; many of the kings even offered him shelter in their dominions; but Justo refused them all, probably fearing to involve them in the same ruin with himself. The first few months of his banishment he therefore spent in wandering with his family through forests and over mountains, without any permanent shelter, and deprived almost of the common necessaries of life. At length his friend and former convert, Augustin, succeeded in persuading him to take refuge in his states; and the emperor, some time afterwards softening a little towards him, sent him into more honourable exile in the kingdom of Tango.

The conversion of the queen of that country was the consequence of his residence at its court. Beautiful and highly endowed herself, her husband was unhappily a man of brutal habits and violent temper. Justo tried in

vain to convert him; but though the monarch would not follow his counsels, he at least repeated them to his wife, who, struck by the sublimity of the doctrines thus casually and imperfectly brought to her knowledge, became extremely desirous of further instruction. This was no easy matter to accomplish; for the jealous passion of her husband kept her (especially during his absence) almost a prisoner to the palace. One day, however, she managed to leave it in disguise; and going straight to the church, begged for baptism of the father-superior, who chanced to be there at the moment. He guessed her to be a person of rank from her intelligent conversation and dignified demeanour; but feeling uncertain of her disposition, he put her off until a later period. The next day she wrote to him by one of her ladies, requesting a solution of some of her doubts; and from that time she never missed a day in sending some one or other of her attendants for further instructions, until by this means they were all of them converted. Astonished and delighted at this unexpected result, she became more than ever anxious to obtain the same blessing for herself; and as it was just at the commencement of the persecution, and there was little chance of his being able to confer it upon her in person, the father-superior commissioned one of her ladies to baptise her in his stead. The lady chosen for this purpose was rich and beautiful, and destined in marriage for one of the greatest nobles of Japan; but after performing the sacred rite, she felt herself so raised above all the honours of the earth by having been the administrator of a life-giving sacrament, that she made a vow of chastity on the spot, and cut off her hair as a sign of her entire renunciation of the world. The queen herself, who was baptised by the name of Grace, was destined to suffer a continual martyrdom at the hands of her husband, who hated the Christians, and was furious with her for having adopted their tenets. He loved her indeed too well to divorce her; but during the thirteen remaining years of her life, he treated her

with inconceivable cruelty, frequently holding a drawn sword to her bosom to terrify her into renouncing the Christian religion. Grace, however, always persevered in the same answer, that he might take her life, but he could not force her to betray her faith; and the sequel proved that she had not miscalculated her strength, for in the early times of the persecution she was one of the first to set the seal of martyrdom on her fidelity. There is still extant a beautiful letter written by her to one of the Jesuit fathers, in which she expresses her joy at their resolution of remaining in the country, and gives an account of the baptism of her infant son, who, being at the point of death, suddenly recovered his health on the reception of the sacrament, which was administered to him by Mary, the lady who had performed the same office for herself, and whom for this reason she was in the habit of calling her spiritual mother.

The banishment of Justo was followed by an edict against the Jesuits, who were commanded to return to India within six months after its promulgation.

They immediately assembled at Firando; and it was there unanimously agreed that rather than abandon their neophytes they would die at their posts, though in order to avoid all unnecessary cause of offence, it was resolved that the churches should be dismantled, and service performed for the future in the private houses of the Christians. No sooner was this resolution known, than, with only one exception, all the Christian chiefs contended with generous eagerness for the hazardous honour of sheltering them in their dominions.

That exception was the king of Bongo. Constantine, thus tried again, again was found to waver; and as at such a moment to waver is to fall, he had no sooner complied with the imperial mandate by banishing the Jesuits, than he proceeded on his own account to persecute his Christian subjects, and finally made his appearance at the court of Cambacundono with a little idol round his neck in token of apostasy. To his extreme mortification, the emperor repaid his meanness by

contempt, while the other kings, who had not the courage to hazard all for their principles, were soon afterwards received by him with courtesy, if not with favour.

Matters had proceeded only thus far, when the Japanese ambassadors arrived at Goa; and in order to avoid the indignation of the emperor, instead of returning as a Christian priest, Father Valignan resolved to present himself as the accredited ambassador of the viceroy of the Indies.

They landed at Nangasaki in 1590, and found the kings of Arima and Omura waiting to receive them. Hither also soon came the king of Bongo; but instead of meeting him in the manner he expected, Mancio Ito reproached his royal cousin with his apostasy, and refused to hold any communication with him so long as he remained the declared enemy of religion. Constantine had already begun to repent of his conduct; instead, therefore, of being offended at this noble freedom, he besought his young relative to speak to Father Valignan on his behalf; and this time, at least, he seems to have been really sincere, for during the remainder of his life he remained perfectly steadfast and fervent in his adherence to the Church.

An audience with the emperor was less easily obtained; but having at last received permission to that effect, Father Valignan made his entry into Miako, attended by many of the Portuguese merchants, and by the young princes his companions, who were robed for the occasion in the European dresses which had been presented them by the Pope. Cambacundono had sent horses and litters for their better accommodation; and he received them very graciously, appearing to be delighted with the presents of the viceroy, and inquiring very minutely of the princes concerning their travels. He was much pleased by their performance on some European instruments of music, and even offered to take Mancio Ito into his service; but having other projects than those of courtly ambition in his heart, the young prince

respectfully declined the proffered honour. Notwithstanding all this apparent cordiality however, Cambacundono could not be induced to rescind any of his late edicts, and Father Valignan was obliged to depart from Miako without having accomplished the chief object of his mission.

During all the time of his residence there he had been allowed perfect freedom in the public exercise of his priestly functions; and the Christians, who had for some time been deprived of any spiritual aid, save such as the fathers could render them in secret, had flocked to him in crowds.

From Miako he proceeded with the Japanese ambassadors to Arima and Omura, to deliver to the respective monarchs of those kingdoms the letters and presents which had been sent them by the Pope; and then, having fulfilled the last duty entailed upon them by their mission to Rome, these young princes revealed to Father Valignan their intention of entering the Society of Jesus. He was probably already aware, in some measure at least, of their design; for they had mentioned it to Father Acqua Viva at Rome, who had required only the consent of their parents as the condition of their acceptance by the Society.

They were therefore immediately admitted into the novitiate, and subsequently became active missionaries in their native land; one of them surviving almost to the latter days of the persecution, and sealing his religious profession in his blood.

This affair being arranged, Father Valignan prepared for his final departure, having gained nothing from the emperor save permission for a certain number of the Jesuits to remain a few months longer at Nangasaki.

Even this was not to be considered in the light of a concession, Cambacundono detaining them there only as hostages for the safe delivery of the letters and presents which he destined for the viceroy, and which, a doubt having been thrown on the validity of the embassy, he fancied Father Valignan would never present.

He also chose another of the Jesuits, whom he attached to his court in quality of interpreter; and he seems to have afterwards conceived a strong personal friendship for this father (Rodriguez by name), who remained in constant personal attendance upon him during his life, and to whom we are indebted for an account of his death. Limited and ungracious as these permissions were, they were yet far too valuable to be refused; and having secretly dispersed the remaining Jesuits through the kingdoms of the Christian kings, Father Valignan reluctantly took his leave of Japan, and returned to the charge of his Indian provinciate.

CHAPTER VI.

Cambacundono sends an expedition to Corea to rid himself of his Christian subjects. Recal of Justo Ucondono. Death of Constantine. Arrival of Franciscan missionaries. Their imprudent conduct. The first bishop of Japan arrives. Martyrdom of Franciscan fathers, three Jesuits, and two children at Nangasaki. Death of Cambacundono. Execution of Augustine, and of the Queen of Tango.

CAMBACUNDONO did not take possession of the throne of Nobunanga without being smitten by the same ambition which had preceded the fall of that monarch. Having received the homage of the Japanese as their king, he desired, like his predecessor, to be adored also as their god. More subtle, however, though perhaps less daring, than Nobunanga, he saw that, in order to obtain the object of his unhallowed ambition, he required not only such an amount of foreign conquest as might seem to entitle him to claim it, but likewise the total annihilation of the Christian converts, who had already sufficiently shown that they would never be accessary to this great national sin; and he thought to accomplish his twofold purpose by declaring war against Corea,—all the posts of honour, and, of course, of danger, being conferred upon the leaders of the Christian movement. Augustine was therefore made generalissimo of the expedition; Simon Condera was placed next to him in dignity; and the kings of Arima, Omura, Bongo, and many others, were all put into positions of distinction more or less prominent. The leaders being Christians, of course the bulk of the army was Christian likewise, as each chief brought his own subjects into the field; and thus the wily emperor calculated that in any case his object would be effected; for if the expedition failed, the Christians as a body would be cut to pieces; and, on the other hand, if it should prove successful, he might

fairly demand the coveted honour of a statue for himself, while the newly acquired territories would present an easy mode of expatriating the conquerors, under colour of rewarding their services by the governments of Corea.

At first he had intended taking an active part in the enterprise himself; and in order to obviate the dangers of a regency, had conferred his present title and authority upon his nephew, while he took that of the Teigo-Sama to himself. By and by, however, a not unnatural jealousy of the new Cambacundono seems to have induced him to change his plan; and as he could not with any show of justice deprive his nephew of a title which he had voluntarily conferred, he got rid of him in the usual Japanese fashion, by a legalised murder; the friends and followers of the unhappy victim, and even his little children, not being exempted from this barbarous sentence.

While deeds of darkness such as these detained this would-be divinity in Japan, the Christian warriors in Corea were endeavouring to unite the duties of religion with the necessary distractions of a time of war; and for this purpose they invited some of the Jesuit fathers to join the expedition, both for the conversion of the people against whom they were going to fight, and for the instruction of the soldiers whom they commanded. The zealous missionaries were only too happy to embrace an opportunity for the still more extensive propagation of the faith, and under their auspices the camp soon became a house of prayer; nor did the Christians fight less bravely, because devotion had superseded the ordinary dissipations of military life. Battles were won, forts and cities were taken, every where the Coreans fled before them; each fresh despatch became merely an announcement of a fresh success; and at length, in his gratitude and joy for a new empire acquired with such marvellous rapidity, Teigo-Sama recalled Justo Ucondono to court. Their meeting was curious, and characteristic of the customs of the nation. "Justo,"

said the emperor, on perceiving the disgraced chieftain once more in his chamber of audience, "I have not seen you for a long time; but now I have work for you to do." With a profound reverence Justo professed himself always at his majesty's service; he was then invited to a great banquet, and all his honours and possessions were given back to him. Thus, without fault or forgiveness, accusation or acquittal, as he had been ruined, so was he now restored; the emperor's good pleasure being sufficient reason for both.

Strange to say—and a striking commentary it is upon the shortcomings of human wisdom—nearly at the same moment when Justo so unexpectedly recovered all that he had lost for the sake of the faith, Constantine, after perpetually playing the traitor to his principles, was as suddenly robbed of all for which they had been bartered. Having incurred the displeasure of the emperor by some misconduct in the Corean war, he was stripped of his dominions, and condemned to a dreary exile in the court of the king of Satzuma, the deadly enemy of his throne and house; but though he never recovered his former position in the world, yet he had the far greater happiness of being enabled to make some compensation for the cowardly backslidings of a former period of his life by the religious steadiness of his declining years. Indeed, from the hour of his last reconciliation to the Church by Father Valignan, he had never shown any symptom of his former weakness; his life was henceforth formed on a model of every Christian virtue, and he died at last in sentiments of contrition and devotion worthy of the son of the good king Francis.

Notwithstanding the services of the Christians in the Corean war, the penal laws were still in force; but as in the first instance they had been the result of a mere ebullition of temper on the part of the emperor, he might, and probably in course of time he would, have either ignored or abolished them, had it not been for the inconsiderate boasting of a Spanish captain, who

showing on a map the vast extent of his sovereign's possessions, and being questioned as to the mode of their acquisition, represented it as entirely the work of the missionaries, who first contrived, he said, to convert the people, and then easily induced them to submit to the king whom they served. It is hard to say whether malice or folly were the motive of this speech; but whichever it was, it produced a suspicion in Teigo-Sama's mind which could never afterwards be eradicated,—a suspicion which he bequeathed as an heir-loom to his successors, however widely they might differ in policy or in blood, and which unhappily to this very day exercises its baneful influence upon Japan, in the form of a law prohibiting the admission into the kingdom of any professor of the Christian faith.

Another circumstance also happened about this time, which tended to confirm and foster this suspicion, once engendered: this was the line of conduct pursued by some Franciscan friars who arrived from the Philippine Islands. They had been induced to take this step by a designing impostor, who hoped by their means to open the ports of Japan to the commerce of Spain, and contrived to persuade them, therefore, that the emperor was most anxious for their presence in his dominions. It was true, indeed, that Pope Gregory XIII. had issued a Bull prohibiting any other missionaries save the members of the Society of Jesus from labouring in Japan; and though this was done at the time in opposition to the wish of the Jesuits themselves, yet the event showed the wisdom by which the Holy See had been guided; for notwithstanding that the Franciscans brought piety and zeal, and every other qualification which could fit them for the task, yet they not only produced confusion in the mission, by their ignorance of the customs and peculiarities of the people with whom they had to deal, but, by the persecution which their imprudence excited against it, they became the accidental causes of its final extinction. At first, it was an anxious question of debate among the Franciscans, whe-

ther Pope Gregory's decree was binding on them; but being already in possession of a Bull of Pope Sixtus V., which authorised them to preach throughout the Indies, in which they considered Japan to be included, and burning with zeal and desire to carry the Name of Jesus to the most distant quarters of the globe, they succeeded at last in persuading themselves that, the prohibition having been issued under very different circumstances, they were justified in supposing, that under the present more favourable aspect of affairs it would not have been enforced. In this their zeal misled them; yet who shall blame the ardour of these simple and earnest men? If, in the fervour of their zeal, they overstepped the nice limits of that obedience which is the only safe guide in religious undertakings, yet we must not forget that he who led them on was the very first to lay down his life in the cause, and, now a martyr, pleads for us in heaven.

The Franciscans presented themselves at the court of Teigo-Sama as the accredited envoys of the governor of the Philippines; and underneath the shelter of their ambassadorial character they were permitted to settle at Miako, but only on condition of refraining from every attempt at assembling the people, either for preaching or prayer. No sooner, however, had they taken possession of their new house, than they proceeded to do both, with every addition of circumstances that could give publicity to their conduct. It was in vain that their predecessors in the mission warned them that they were risking the safety of the whole Christian Church; in vain that the very heathens themselves remonstrated with them on the folly of calling the emperor's attention to their as yet hardly tolerated residence in the country. Their pure religious zeal found ample encouragement in the great body of the people, who, ever careless of consequences, and only rejoicing in the opportunity of assisting once more at the public services of the Church, eagerly flocked to hear them; and charmed at the sight of so much piety, and ignorant of the real

dispositions of the emperor, the Franciscans were not unnaturally led to conclude that the timidity of the Jesuits had put an unnecessary check upon the fervour of their converts.

To counteract any ill effects, therefore, from this fancied over-caution, they thought it necessary to extend their own sphere of action as much as they could; so from Miako they went to Osaka, and from thence to Nangasaki, where the Jesuits received them with the utmost cordiality, though the ill effects of their imprudence were soon felt in the town. Hitherto, notwithstanding the penal laws, the fathers in that city had contrived, by a system of most consummate prudence, to pursue their ministerial functions undisturbed. Under their care Nangasaki had become emphatically the Christian town of Japan, and only a little later its inhabitants celebrated the conversion of its last pagan citizen by an especial festival; but the arrival of the new missionaries cast a shadow over their smiling prospects; the public services in their church excited suspicion; and the Christians were prohibited, by sound of trumpet, from attending Mass or sermon, or even from praying at a great cross which had been erected outside the walls. The friars themselves were banished; and they retired to Osaka, having refused the refuge which had been generously offered them by the Jesuits.

After their departure, things gradually returned to their former state, a result greatly facilitated by the conversion of the governor. He was a young man of great talent and powers of mind; and having once found himself compelled by his position to act against the Christians, he thought it only consistent with justice to ascertain what was the real nature of their tenets,—an inquiry which ended in his soliciting baptism himself. The doctrine of the Incarnation seems to have particularly struck him, by the marked contrast which it presented to the favourite hero-worship of the Japanese; for, as he shrewdly remarked, there was nothing inconsistent or inconceivable in the idea of a God becoming

man for the creatures He had made; while, on the contrary, to attribute divinity to men, often the worst and most wicked of their species, was an act as destructive to morality as it was repugnant to sense.

About this time, Peter Martinez, the new Bishop of Japan, arrived at Nangasaki with his coadjutor. Steps were soon taken by the principal Christians to secure his reception at court; and, after some little demur, he was permitted to pay his respects to the emperor, who showed him the same kindness and consideration which he had uniformly exhibited towards the Jesuit fathers whenever brought personally into contact with them, and which seemed very strongly to characterise his subsequent persecution of the Christians as the effect rather of a mistaken diplomacy than of any real hatred of the Christian faith and its professors. The period of the Bishop's arrival in Japan may be considered as the breathing-pause between the commencement of persecution and its final adoption. The sword had been unsheathed; but, except in a few isolated cases, it had not as yet drunk the blood of the Christians; and under the prudent guidance of the new Bishop, united to the personal consideration which the emperor entertained for the Jesuits individually as well as collectively, it is possible that he might even now have been induced to sheath it again, had not the Franciscan missionaries still continued to act in such open defiance of his orders, that he became more and more convinced they were really plotting the ruin of his throne; and with the words of the Spanish captain, their countryman, yet ringing in his ears, it is scarcely to be wondered that he should have resolved upon the most summary measures for ridding himself of their presence. Guards were set by his command over both their house and that of the Jesuits; and this order being misrepresented as a general persecution of the Christians, it was every where hailed by them with feelings of exultation and joy. Justo Ucondono rode at once to the Jesuits' house, to congratulate them on their good fortune; and the two sons of the Governor of Miako likewise entered

the city for the express purpose of sharing the fate of their brethren in the faith.

The elder of these two princes having assembled his servants to acquaint them with his resolution, they all agreed, in the words of St. Thomas, to "go and die with him;" and on his objecting to one who was a recent convert, and who, he feared, might hardly endure the trial, the poor man made such earnest remonstrances, that at last he was allowed to accompany them. The younger brother, fearing his father's safety might be compromised by the religion of his children, went to acquaint him with the fact of his conversion; and an affecting interview took place, during which the governor, with something of the spirit of an ancient Roman, told his son "that passionately as he had always loved him, and indeed still loved him, yet he would put him to death with his own hand if the emperor should give him an order to that effect." Not less firm, but with the firmness of a Christian spirit as opposed to that of a heathen, was the young man's reply. "He had revealed his religion," he said, "to secure, not his own safety, but that of his father; and whether he met his death by the actual hand of the latter, or only by his order, he would still have a double debt of gratitude to pay to him; one for the temporal life he had hitherto enjoyed, and now a second and still greater, for that eternal life which he was about to receive through his means." Having said thus much, they parted; the son returned to his anticipated fate in the city, and the father to his wife, with whom he lamented over his unhappy fate; for that if a massacre of the Christians should be ordered, he would certainly be condemned, by virtue of his official duties, to be the executioner of his own child.

Nor were these mere isolated instances of courage and resolution. Every where the Christians prepared in the same undaunted spirit to breast the waves of that persecution which was destined to sweep them from the face of the earth; and no sooner was it known that

Teigo-Sama desired to have a census of his Christian subjects, than men, women, and children flocked into Miako to inscribe their names upon the list, hoping thereby to win for themselves a martyr's crown. Various interesting anecdotes are told of the heroism displayed upon this occasion; and among them we find a curious instance of the mingling of the old pagan pride with the new-born zeal of the Christian convert in the history of a good old man called Andrew. He had been a renowned warrior in his day; and now, in the eightieth year of his age, and the first of his conversion, he was most anxious to die for Jesus; but he could not understand the necessity of dying as Jesus had died, that is to say, without remonstrance or resistance; passive endurance was as yet but simple cowardice in his eyes; "he would die, indeed," he said, "right gladly with the good fathers who had brought him to a knowledge of the Christian religion; but first he would avenge their quarrel, kill all he could, and then, and not till then, would he lay down his life for Christ." In vain his son assured him, that if he would merit the martyr's crown he must not resist the sword; the old warrior could not comprehend this doctrine; and he had worked himself up into a fit of real indignation at the fancied cowardice proposed to him, when he chanced to enter an apartment where his daughter-in-law was employed with her Christian servants in making garments of that peculiar kind which the Japanese always wore in the hour of execution; and when, in answer to his inquiries, they told him, half in jest and half in earnest, that they were preparing these robes to die for Jesus, his simple honest heart was so touched by their patient resolution that he burst into tears, declaring that he also would die as they did.

In truth, however, the emperor had not as yet made up his mind, either to injure the Jesuits, or to shed the blood of the Christians wholesale; and this he caused to be intimated to the Bishop, accompanied by an express declaration, that his edict was directed solely against

the Spanish Franciscans. In fact, almost immediately afterwards the friars were condemned to lose their ears and noses, and then to be crucified; and, as a warning to the great body of the Christians, twelve of those who were most in the habit of frequenting their church were included in the same sentence, as were also some young children, a Jesuit father, and two Jesuit novices, who chanced to be in the house at the moment it was surrounded. These last might possibly have been released upon proper representation of the case to the emperor; but it was considered dangerous to try the experiment, lest his indignation should be roused against the whole body, if he found that any among them had been in communication with the friars; and the Provincial was reluctantly obliged to leave them to their fate. The prisoners suffered the amputation of a portion of their ears in the high town of Miako, the governor, by a rare exercise of clemency, having remitted the more barbarous mutilation contemplated by the sentence; and some of these bloody trophies being afterwards carried to the Father Superior of the Jesuits, he burst into tears, partly of compassion, but most of joy, while, offering them up to God, he uttered these touching words: "Behold, O Divine Saviour, these first-fruits of our labours in Japan. Grant that this blood, poured forth upon the earth, may make it fruitful in faithful souls, who shall glorify Thy Name in this unknown and distant quarter of the globe."

While this scene was passing in the college, the martyrs themselves were conducted in carts about the city, their sentence being carried upon long poles before them. Far, however, from the insults and derisions which usually accompanied similar processions, the crowd had nothing but respectful sympathy to offer to the present victims; many were even moved to tears as the cart containing the children passed along, and they were seen standing together with their hands tied behind them, and their little faces bathed in blood, while with

their innocent voices they still sang hymns in honour of their God.

Father Peter Baptist, the Superior of the Franciscans, and a man possessing every virtue except prudence, preached continually to the people as they went along; so also did Paul Miki, the Jesuit, who even converted two of his guards in the course of this circuit. Nangasaki was the town destined for their execution, and hither they were soon afterwards despatched; but so badly mounted and so poorly clad, that but for the voluntary charity both of heathens and Christians, they must have died on the road from the inclemency of the weather.

None of the Jesuits were permitted to accompany them; even the Bishop was obliged to send his blessing by proxy; but one of the fathers managed to meet them before they arrived at Nangasaki; and a halt, contrived by the friendly governor for this very purpose, enabled him both to receive their general confessions and the vows of the Jesuit novices, who were most anxious to be admitted into the society before their execution. Rodriguez also, the emperor's interpreter, was happy enough to obtain an interview with the prisoners; and Father Peter Baptist, in a spirit of humility most touching and edifying at a moment when all around were honouring him as a future martyr, asked pardon of the Jesuit, on his knees, for the injury which he now felt that he and his brethren had brought upon the mission. Father Rodriguez was not to be outdone in humility, therefore he also demanded pardon of the Franciscans in the same lowly posture, on behalf of his society, if haply any thing had been either said or done on its side contrary to Christian charity; and the two fathers then embraced each other with the tenderest expressions of affection and esteem. The condemned Jesuits likewise thanked the Franciscans so fervently for the share which they had had in this happy consummation of their labours, that the guards were filled with wonder, exclaiming almost in the very

words of those Roman soldiers who led Valerian and his brother to their doom: "What manner of men are these, who go to destruction as others to a banquet or a ball? Whoever saw so much suffering and so much joy? A hymn of triumph and a felon's death." They might well ask the question; and greatly must their astonishment have increased when, upon drawing near to Nangasaki, the crosses destined for the execution became visible on the mountain-heights; for at the sight of this new Calvary the martyrs burst into fresh exclamations of joy and devotion, and little Lewis more especially, seeing three crosses smaller than the rest, eagerly inquired which was to be his, embracing it, as soon as he reached the spot, with as much eagerness and affection as even the apostle St. Andrew had testified for his.

The boy was only twelve years of age, and might easily have escaped when first taken at the convent; but he preferred dying with the fathers to living without them. Nor was this a mere momentary impulse of love or of enthusiasm. Every one of these poor children remained firm from first to last, notwithstanding the severe trial to which their constancy was put, both during the many days that elapsed after the cruel mutilation practised upon them at Miako, and in the weary journey and protracted preparations for their final execution. In vain did the parents of one of them beseech him to have pity on their grey hairs, and to purchase safety at the price of his religion; in vain did the governors themselves alternately offer life to Lewis and to Anthony, with promises even of favour and promotion, if they would but abandon their faith: entreaty and proposal were unhesitatingly refused; and baffled and disappointed, the tempters were at length compelled to leave the children to their fate, with their older but not more heroic companions.

The Japanese mode of crucifixion is not that which was suffered by our Lord, and which we naturally associate with the name. The victim is merely fastened

to his cross by the hands and arms, and by an iron ring passing round the neck so as to keep the head in an erect position; and a sharp lance then driven into the heart extinguishes life in a moment. Such was the death which the martyrs were now to endure; and lying each upon his own cross, they waited for the moment when they were to be lifted up on high. Troops had been ranged round the foot of the hill in order to prevent any but the nearest relations of the martyrs from approaching the spot; but the vast plains extending from that point to the city were thronged by a dense mass of people, come to witness the execution. At first a solemn silence reigned throughout that mighty multitude; every voice was hushed, every heart and eye were fixed upon the fatal spot; but when, at a given signal, the crosses were raised, and the martyrs were seen hanging each from his own cross, with an executioner at his side, ready to strike the fatal blow, the feelings of nature could no longer be repressed, and from the plains below there rose a mournful cry that reached even to the ears of the dying saints. They responded not to the lamentation; on the contrary, Father Peter Baptist began the *Benedictus*, and at the sound of his voice the others took up the strain, and continued it to the end with a devotion which quite electrified the spectators. The children then asked Father Peter to sing with them the *Laudate pueri;* but absorbed in profound contemplation, he heard them not; and they sang it therefore themselves, never ceasing until their innocent voices were hushed in death. They were all struck nearly at the same moment, and all met their fate with the same courage and constancy as they had shown from the beginning; but Paul Miki seems more especially to have died in a spirit of devotion to the Passion of our Saviour. He it was who had petitioned for this reason that they might be executed on a Friday; and having obtained this request, he had also the consolation of dying with the very words of Jesus on his lips; exclaiming, "Into Thy hands I

commend my spirit" almost simultaneously with the blow which sent him to his God.

No sooner was it known that the martyrs had actually expired, than all the scenes of the old Roman martyrdoms were renewed in their regard. A poor wretch who, through fear or shame, had basely denied his religion, was reconverted on the spot; and taught by the same unerring instinct which had led the children of the infant Church to seek the relics of the honoured dead, often even at the risk of their own lives, the Japanese converts now forced the barriers, and bursting through every obstacle, tore off portions of the martyrs' robes, and dipped veils and handkerchiefs in their gaping wounds, until the governor was obliged to double the guards, in order to remove the people to a distance.*

The blow which this martyrdom inflicted on the Church was speedily followed by a fresh importation of Christian warriors into the Corea, and by a new edict for the banishment of the Jesuit fathers. Their churches were every where destroyed; such colleges as they had been allowed to retain in the dominions of the Christian kings were broken up, and the students scattered to their several homes; and, forced at length to yield to the storm, the provincial had actually named some of the least useful members of the society to be sent back to India, in hopes of being thus enabled to retain the others without incurring the suspicions of Teigo-Sama, when that monarch died. The last part of his reign had been far less fortunate than its commencement. Corea, won by the blood and treasures of his Christian subjects, had been lost again by some unhappy failure in his negotiations for peace—a failure chiefly to be attributed to the delay which his absurd vanity had caused him to make for the more magnificent reception of the Chinese ambassadors who had been deputed to treat at his court on the subject. Almost at the same time, Japan was devastated by frightful storms and by

* These first martyrs of Japan were canonised by Pope Urban VIII., and their festival is celebrated on the 5th of February.

a succession of earthquakes, one of which destroyed the magnificent city and palace he had built for himself; so that he, the mighty and unapproachable monarch, the would-be conqueror of the world, and candidate for the honours of divinity, was forced to fly in the midst of the night from the ruins of his own abode; and with no other apparel than such as he chanced to be wearing at the moment, to seek for safety in the kitchen of a slave. But no warning reached his conscience, no misfortune lowered his pride. As he had lived, so did he die. Father Rodriguez, his interpreter, was with him to the last, but he tried in vain to rouse him to the contemplation of eternity; even in the agonies of death the ruling passion of his life was strong within him, and his soul was engrossed by his anxiety to secure the succession to his son, a boy of about eleven years of age, and to procure for himself the honour of being placed among the idols of Japan. The latter wish was far more easy of accomplishment than the first. As soon as he had expired, a temple was erected; a statue which during his lifetime he had had the vanity to have modelled after his own likeness was set up in it for adoration, and he was placed among the Chadotschi under the title of the new god of war. Nothing could have been more favourable to the Christian religion, or more fatal to the cause of idolatry, than this gross act of adulation to the departed monarch. The tradition of his life was yet fresh in the memories of men. Every one knew him to have been ambitious, debauched, cruel, proud, and sordid; and naturally concluding that if he were indeed a fitting object of adoration, the idols among whom he had been placed must probably have been of the same character as himself, thousands embraced Christianity who had hitherto been deaf to every argument of the fathers.

The death of Teigo-Sama put an end to the Corean war; and the Christian princes being thus restored to their own dominions, religion began to breathe freely again. Churches were rebuilt, colleges re-established,

and things were soon nearly upon the same footing as they had been in the days of Nobunanga; but, unfortunately, the despotic and fluctuating nature of the government of Japan rendered every interval of peace to the Church fleeting and uncertain as the glories of an April day.

The young prince being still in his minority when his father died, Teigo-Sama had appointed a regency, consisting of a chief governor, with forty-nine of the inferior kings to act as his assistants. This singular form of government was apparently chosen in order that the number and mutual jealousies of the persons thus strangely associated might act as a check both upon the ambition of the regent and upon that of one another; and if the experiment was not altogether successful, it showed at least the sagacity which had foreseen and endeavoured to remedy the danger.

The regent commenced his government under the title of the Deifu-Sama; but it soon became so manifest that he intended to usurp the crown altogether, that Augustine, Gibonoscia, and others of the governors, who, having taken an oath of fidelity to the young prince, were resolved to keep it, leagued together against him. The good fortune of the admiral, however, had at length departed; in the first pitched battle which took place, the combined forces of the governors were utterly defeated, and Augustine taken prisoner. For a moment he had a violent temptation to disappoint his captors by suicide, an act so common and so admired among his fellow-countrymen; but the law of God forbade it, and the Christian chief put back the thought, and with a nobler courage submitted to his fate. He was led at once into the presence of the Prince of Budsen, one of the generals in the victorious army, who had formerly been his bosom friend. The prince was so affected at the sight of the fallen chief, that he burst into tears, and was unable to speak. Augustine saw that he was weeping, and raising his head with great dignity, addressed him thus: "Sir, you know what I

once was, and you see what I have now become. I have therefore nothing new to say, and but one request to make at your hands."

The prince was silent; he thought Augustine was going to ask his life, which he knew to be forfeited to Deifu-Sama's vengeance; and therefore he made no reply. The prisoner guessed the cause of his embarrassment, and hastily went on to say, "It is not my life that I ask; had not the law of God forbidden it, I had never been brought alive into your hands to-day. All I crave is a Jesuit father who may prepare me to die as a Christian should."

Natural as this request might seem, it was refused by Deifu-Sama, to whom it was referred; and thus left destitute of all human succour, Augustine threw himself upon the mercies of God with such a generous confidence, that, far from quailing before the prospect of an ignominious death, he rather exulted in the thought of being thus brought into closer imitation of his Lord and Saviour.

When therefore he and his former friend Gibonoscia, with another of their companions in misfortune, were led to execution, mounted on pitiful horses, and exposed to all the jeers and insults of the mob, it needed not to ask who was the Christian, and who the heathen? The faith in which they severally had trusted was written upon their very faces. Filled with the human pride inculcated and cherished by their idolatry, the heathens were so overwhelmed by the shame of their situation—a shame which for them had no hidden value to compensate for its exterior bitterness—that they covered their faces with their hands, and wept like men in the depths of despair; while Augustine, on the contrary, as the disciple of a religion which places humiliation above honour, and gives to virtue in disgrace a precious consciousness of its resemblance to the Redeemer of mankind, not only met every insult with the calmness of one who felt that nothing but sin could really lower him in the eyes of God or the estimation

of good men, but with an air and manner which showed alike his vivid hope of future bliss and the greatness of his present consolation.

To a faithful Christian, despatched by the Jesuit fathers to assist him in the hour of death, he declared that he died not only content, but full of joy; for having confessed and communicated before going into battle, he had since done all that had been suggested to him as a fitting preparation for this solemn occasion. Some of the bonzes then wished to perform in his favour certain superstitious ceremonies usual on such occasions; but rejecting their twice-offered services with scorn, he took a picture of our Lady into his hands, and set it three times upon his head—a mark of the greatest honour and esteem that can be paid to any thing or person in Japan. In fear, in trembling, and in tears, his companions died; but when his turn was come, without any change of countenance or of colour, he fell upon his knees, and earnestly recommended his soul to God; his head was severed from his body while the words "Jesus! Mary!" the invariable death-cry of the Japanese Christians, were yet trembling on his lips. Thus perished this great man,—a hero in the estimation of the world, a saint in the eyes of the Church. From the first hour of his conversion to the day of his death, he had been the unwearied promoter of the Christian religion, and its most zealous and fearless defender against the machinations of its enemies. His military talents, his high renown, his wealth and power,—all had been devoted to this one great object; and he died at last because, scrupulous of the oath which he had taken to one prince, he opposed every attempt at usurpation on the part of another. His wife and daughter found a temporary asylum with the Jesuits at Nangasaki, who offered them hospitality at the peril of their own lives; but instead of resenting this act of gratitude to their departed benefactor, Deifu-Sama seemed almost to give it the sanction of his own approbation by afterwards granting a free pardon to these ladies, who had

been involved by the laws of the country in one common ruin with their father and husband.

The Queen of Tango was the only other Christian of note who perished in this unhappy war. Her husband had sided with Deifu-Sama; but when he went to join his army, he gave the cruel order that his wife should be put to death if the enemy's forces approached near enough the city to make it likely that she should fall into their hands. Grace seems to have been nearly idolised by all who were about her; when therefore the near neighbourhood of the enemy rendered it imperative to put the king's sentence into execution, those appointed to the fatal deed fell upon their knees, and with many tears declared their mission, as well as their intention of destroying themselves as soon as it should be accomplished. Far from being either astonished or dismayed, the queen adored profoundly that Divine Providence which mercifully called her from a world that had no charms for her; and then, seeking to console her heathen servants, who were howling and tearing their hair with every sign of savage despair, she softly said: "O my children, be not afflicted! Death to a Christian soul is but the passing from a temporal life to one that is eternal. Do therefore your master's orders without fear or sorrow; but remember that God forbids you to lay violent hands on yourselves, and I, your queen, forbid it likewise. Rather embrace the Christian religion; and then indeed I shall die content."

Unhappily, this advice was too contrary to their notions of honour and fidelity to be at all acceptable to those who heard her; and in the name of all the others, the captain of the band declared that nothing should induce them to accept a religion which forbade the tribute of affection they had determined on paying to her memory.

Seeing all her arguments were in vain, the queen retired to her oratory to pray, while they employed themselves in filling the outer chambers of the palace with gunpowder. This done, and the prayers of the

queen concluded, she took a tender and affectionate leave of all her women; and loosing herself the silken robes from off her neck, she submitted to her fate with the same calmness and serenity which she had shown throughout every portion of this trying scene. Her reluctant executioners reverentially cast a silken mantle over the body, and then setting fire to the train of powder which had been laid, they and every other inmate of the palace perished in the terrible explosion which ensued.

The king her husband lamented her death with a grief as extravagant as though he had not been himself the author of her doom; and hearing that the Jesuits had collected some half-burnt bones, supposed to be those of the murdered queen, with the intention of giving them decent interment, he ordered them to perform a funeral Mass for her at Osaka. The church was hung with black, and a *chapelle ardente* being placed before the altar, the Mass was sung with so much majesty and devotion, that the king, who with all his nobles was present, declared that the ceremonies of his native bonzes were far inferior to those in use among the Christians. He was also much struck by the disinterestedness of the Jesuit fathers, to whom he presented a large sum of money, but which they immediately afterwards distributed among the poor: and from that time he gave free permission to all his subjects to profess the Christian religion; though he never attempted to embrace it himself,—being one of those instances so often to be met with in the history of Japan, and, alas, not less frequently in that of the world at large, of men who see the truth, admire and confess it, and yet live and die without making it their own.

CHAPTER VII.

Persecution of the Church in the kingdom of Figo. Charity of the Bishop and Jesuit Fathers. Martyrdoms of Japanese nobles, with their wives and families. Persecution in Firando and Arima. Heroic martyrdoms of children and others.

THE death of Augustine and his compeers effectually repressed any further attempt against the power of Deifu-Sama; and thus left to pursue his ambitious designs unchecked, he no longer hesitated to take the title of the Kumbo-Sama, which had never been in use since the days of Nobunanga. Though the commencement of his reign was not marked by persecution, yet it is evident that the speech of the Spanish captain, which had poisoned the mind of his predecessor against the Christians, still rankled darkly and silently in his own; for however kindly he might express himself towards individual professors of that religion, he never could be persuaded either to repeal the persecuting laws of Teigo-Sama, or to interfere with such of the inferior monarchs as chose to put them into execution. In this way hundreds of the best and noblest of Japan perished under the jurisdiction of men scarcely their superiors, and often only their equals, through some caprice of fortune, or of imperial favour, which had put them in possession of a conquered kingdom.

The king of Figo led the way in the ranks of the persecutors by a sentence of outlawry against his Christian subjects, who, in consequence of this sentence, were driven from their houses and deprived of all office, revenue, and rank; while the food and shelter which the people of their own nation were forbidden to give them, they were, by a most fiendlike ingenuity, prohibited under pain of death from seeking elsewhere. It is plain that death itself would have been almost a

mercy, compared to the miseries entailed by such a penalty as this; nevertheless cold, hunger, fatigue, and death itself with its attendant horrors, all were endured without a murmur for the sake of Christ; and at last, at the end of six months, the sufferers were permitted to go and seek the hospitality of their brethren at Nangasaki, where they were received with the utmost tenderness and affection, the Bishop and his clergy (the Jesuits) devoting to their support all the alms that native Christians or foreign princes had offered for their own.

Scarcely had the exiles reached this hospitable asylum ere another edict was published in Figo, commanding all the remaining Christians to repair to the house of a bonze appointed for the purpose, and in his presence to perform a certain ceremony, which was to be considered as a declaration of their belief in his teaching. Death was to be the penalty of a refusal; and two noblemen, named John and Simon, were chosen as examples of severity to the rest. Both were friends of the governor, to whom the order had been intrusted, and he did what he could to save them. "If they would but *feign* compliance with the king's decree," or "have the ceremony privately performed at their own houses," or "bribe the bonze to allow it to be supposed he had received their recantation,"—each of these alternatives was as eagerly urged as it was indignantly rejected; and when a band of ruffians dragged John to the bonze's house, and set the superstitious book which was to be the token of his apostasy by main force upon his head, he protested so loudly and vehemently against the violence done to his will, that nothing remained but to sentence him to death. The execution took place in the presence of the governor; and from the chamber, still reeking with the blood of one friend, he went to the house of the other on a similar mission, and with equal reluctance.

Simon was quietly conversing with his mother when the governor entered; and the latter could not refrain

from weeping as he besought that lady to have pity upon them both, and by advising compliance with the king's commands, to spare herself the anguish of losing a son, and himself that of imbruing his hands in the blood of a friend. Touching as was the appeal, it was made in vain; for in her answer the Christian mother proved true to her faith; so that the governor left the house, indignantly declaring that by her obstinacy she was guilty of the death of her son. Another nobleman entered soon afterwards, charged with the personal execution of the sentence. This was no unusual method of proceeding, since every Japanese nobleman, strange to say, may at any moment be called upon to officiate in such cases, it being a favour often granted to persons of rank to die by the hand of a friend or a servant, rather than by that of the ordinary headsman. Jotivava was a friend of Simon's, and he proceeded with what heart he might to his sad and revolting duty. Knowing his errand well, Simon received him with an affectionate smile, and then prostrated himself in prayer before an image of our Saviour crowned with thorns, while his wife and mother called for warm water that he might wash,—a ceremony the Japanese always observe upon joyful occasions. Tears of natural regret would flow indeed even in the midst of this generous exultation; and Agnes, falling upon her knees, besought her husband to cut off her hair, as a sign that she never would marry again. After a little hesitation, he complied with this request; prophesying, however, that she and his mother would soon follow him to heaven; and then, accompanied by the three *Giffiaques*, or officers of the Confraternity of Mercy, whom he had summoned to be present at the execution, they all entered the hall where it was intended to take place. Michael, one of the Giffiaques, carried a crucifix; the other two bore lighted torches; and Simon walked between his wife and mother, while his disconsolate servants brought up the rear. An unhappy renegade met them at the entrance to take leave of Simon; but struck by the con-

trast between his own conduct and that of the martyr, he burst into tears, and was unable to speak. Most eloquently did Simon urge him to repentance, unconsciously using almost the very words of his Divine Master, as he bade him weep, "not for his own approaching fate, but for the fell apostasy by which he, a renegade, had rendered himself guilty of hell-fire;" then distributing his rosaries and other objects of devotion as memorials among his friends, he refused to give to the apostate a single bead, urgently as he besought it of him, unless he would make a solemn promise of repentance and amendment.

The condition was at length accepted, and Simon joyfully returned to his prayers. He and his friends recited the litany; and then, bowing before a picture of our Saviour until his forehead touched the ground, the nobleman who acted as executioner took off his head at a single blow. It fell at the feet of one of the Giffiaques; but his mother, with the courage of a Machabee, took it in her hands, exclaiming, "O dear head, resplendent now with celestial glory! O happy Simon, who hast had the honour of dying for Him who died for thee! My God! Thou didst give me Thy Son; take now this son of mine, sacrificed for the love of Thee!" After the mother came poor Agnes, weeping some softer tears over the relics of her husband; and then, foreseeing that her own death would speedily follow upon his, she and her mother betook themselves to prayer, the three Giffiaques remaining in attendance in order to be able to assist at their execution; and, in fact, twenty-four hours had not elapsed before it was told them they were to die; the officer who came to acquaint them with their sentence bringing with him Magdalen, the wife of John, and Lewis, a little child whom the latter had adopted as his own, both of whom were condemned to a similar fate.

With eager joy the prisoners embraced each other, praising, blessing, and thanking God, not only that they were to suffer for Jesus, but also that they were

to suffer on a cross like Jesus; and then, robed in their best attire, they set off for the place of execution in palanquins which the guards had provided for the purpose. The Giffiaques walked at their side; but small need had they to offer motives for constancy to these heroic souls, burning with the desire of martyrdom, and eager to enter the path by which their nearest and dearest had already ascended to heaven. Jane, the mother of Simon, besought the executioner to bind her limbs as tightly as possible, that she might thus share the anguish which the nails inflicted upon those of Jesus; and she preached from her cross with so much force and eloquence, that the presiding officer, fearing the effects of her words upon the people, had her stabbed without waiting for the rest of the victims. Lewis and Magdalen were tied up next. They bound the child so violently that he could not refrain from shrieking; but when they asked him if he was afraid to die, he said he was not; and so they took and set him up directly opposite his mother. For a brief interval the martyr and her adopted child gazed silently on each other; then, summoning all her strength, she said, "Son, we are going to heaven: take courage, and cry, 'Jesus, Mary!' with your latest breath." And again the child replied, as he had done before when, on leaving their own home, she had made him a similar exhortation, "Mother, you shall be obeyed!" The executioner struck at him first, but missed his aim; and more than ever fearing for his constancy, Magdalen exhorted him from her cross, while Michael, standing at its foot, spoke words of comfort to him. But the child needed not their urging; he did not shriek again, nor did he shrink, but waited patiently until a second blow had pierced him through and through; and the lance, yet reeking with his blood, was directly afterwards plunged into the heart of his mother, whose sharpest pang had probably already passed on the instant when the son of her love expired before her. And now the fair and youthful Agnes alone remained, kneeling, as when she

first had reached the place of execution; for no one had yet had the courage to approach her. Like the headsman of her namesake, the loveliest child of Christian story, her very executioners could only weep that they were bid to mar the beauty of any thing so fair; their hands were powerless to do their office; and finding at last that no one sought to bind her, she went herself and laid her gently and modestly down upon her cross. There she lay, waiting for her hour, calm and serene as if pillowed on an angel's bosom, until at length some of the spectators, induced partly by a bribe offered by the executioner, but chiefly by a bigoted hatred of her religion, bound her, and lifted up her cross, and then struck her blow after blow, until beneath their rude and unaccustomed hands she painfully expired. For a year and a day the bodies were left to hang upon their crosses, as a terror to all others of the same religion; but Christians were not wanting to watch the blackening corpses, and, with a love like that of Respha, the mother of the sons of Saul, to drive from thence the fowls of the air by day, and the beasts of the field by night; and finally, when the period of prohibition was expired, reverently to gather the hallowed bones to their last resting-place in the church of Nangasaki.

The Giffiaques were the next who felt the tyrant's rage. The governor himself urged on their punishment, for the loss of his friends had made him furious; and, attributing it entirely, as indeed it was entirely to be attributed, to the fact of their religion, he resolved to wreak his vengeance upon all others who professed it. One difficulty he had, however, in the full accomplishment of his desire, namely, that no punishment which he could devise for his victims was too dreadful to be accepted by them with alacrity and joy. "What shall I do with these men?" he cried, in a kind of savage perplexity upon being told that the Giffiaques had rather courted than evaded their imprisonment: "Death they rejoice in, as in the acquisition of an empire, and

they go to exile as a slave to freedom. The cross is a royal throne, which they mount with pleasure and occupy with pride. I will therefore contrive for them a fate which shall make death, under any form whatever, a boon to be desired, but not to be attained." Within the city-walls there was a prison which the king had constructed for the reception of his debtors. Open on every side, its inmates were exposed both to the curious gaze of the passing crowds and to the alternate suffering of heat and cold, as summer or winter revolved over their heads. There, huddled together in this enclosure, the prisoners lay, not upon mats, nor yet upon the damp cold earth, which in comparison would have been a mercy, but upon heaps of horrid filth, the accumulation of many years; for by a hideous cruelty of invention, the monster would never permit the cleansing out of these loathsome places, hoping by the horrible condition of their dungeon to extort a speedier payment from his victims. Into this den of suffering the governor cast the three Christians whom he had selected for his prey, never doubting that they would be soon subdued by the anguish of a life more terrible than the most lingering and painful death; and so for years the Giffiaques lingered on, breathing this infected air—pillowed, sleeping and waking, on the loathsome dung which matted all the pavement, feeding upon such dry crusts and filthy water as their jailors chose to give them; until at length one among them died, and then the tyrant, weary of such willing victims, commanded the other two to be cut in pieces.

According to the usual custom of Japan, their children were condemned to suffer with them; and however hateful such a practice must appear to the natural heart of man, yet was it ever to the martyrs a most welcome boon; for theirs was a Christian as well as a parental love, teaching them to set the spiritual above the temporal welfare of their children, and therefore rather to rejoice in, than simply to meet with calm submission, that double condemnation which, by uniting the

fate of their little ones with their own, snatched them from any future chance of perversion, and put them at once in possession of their heavenly kingdom.

One of these little victims was sleeping when they came to fetch him: he was only six years old, and so tiny, that he had to run as fast as he could in order to keep up with the soldier who conducted him to execution; yet, so far from being frightened at his fate, he even gazed without dismay on the disfigured corpses of his father, uncle, and cousin, who had all suffered ere he reached the spot; and then, kneeling down and joining his hands together, looked up smiling in the face of him who was to lay him at their side. That look disarmed his executioner. The man suddenly sheathed his sword, declaring that he had not the heart to perform his office; and when two others sought to do it for him, they also burst into tears as that innocent smiling face met their downward gaze; nor was the deed accomplished until a common slave, compelled by force to the odious duty, literally hacked and hewed the poor infant to pieces.

While these scenes, and scenes like these, were constantly recurring at Figo, the kingdom of Firando, where persecution had first commenced, and where it never could be said to have entirely ceased, was likewise giving its quota of martyr-triumphs to the Church; Damian, the blind man of Amangucchi, whom we have honourably mentioned in a former chapter, being almost the first to lay down his life for the faith. From the time when the Jesuit fathers were forcibly driven out of that city, the entire management of the infant mission had devolved upon this poor old man, whose life was henceforth passed in preaching, catechising and baptising, visiting the sick, and burying the dead, and doing as much of the work of a zealous missionary as could be accomplished by any one lacking holy orders. This was sufficient for the tyrant, and Damian received his choice between Christianity and death on the one hand, and on the other, apostasy and life, with

all that could make life most desirable to the heart of man.

The brave old Christian was not long in making his choice; and he died for a testimony to the faith, as he had lived for its propagation, his body being cut to pieces, in order to prevent the other Christians from collecting his relics for more honourable interment.

His death was the signal for innumerable other massacres in this and other kingdoms of Japan; but nowhere was the heathen enmity more unrelentingly displayed than in the once flourishing and Christian kingdom of Arima. The king of that country had indeed caused all his children to be brought up Christians; but the eldest, Michael, by no means responded to the care and anxiety which had been lavished upon him. Mean, heartless, and ambitious, he possessed less of the convictions of a Christian convert than of that lust of power and worldly honour which especially distinguished his heathen ancestors,—a passion which ultimately caused him to stop at no means, however base and wicked, whereby he might be enabled to gratify his desires.

Actuated by this double motive, he divorced his legitimate wife for the purpose of espousing the daughter of the Kumbo; the old king, Christian though he was, weakly and wickedly connived at this intrigue, and had to mourn for the rest of his days over the mingled sin and folly of his conduct; for Michael, false to his father as he had been treacherous to his God, did not hesitate to use his new wife's influence at court in order to wrest the government of Arima out of his hands. This reverse brought the old monarch to his senses. Like another David, he confessed that he had sinned; and acknowledging that the God upon whose laws he had trampled had dealt justly by him, he accepted his sentence without a murmur, and led a most exemplary and penitential life in the exile to which his son had consigned him. By and by, however, the latter, fearing lest some future change of fortune might restore him to the Kumbo's

favour, obtained from that monarch an order for his execution.

The choice of suicide, as the more honourable mode of death, was given to him; but the king made an answer worthy of his better days: "He wanted," he said, "neither courage nor resolution to die by his own hand; but the law of God forbade it, and he chose rather to pass for a coward in the eyes of men than to prove really a rebel in the sight of God."

There was no priest to soothe and encourage him in his dying moments; but his wife Justa remained with him to the last, exhorting him continually to repentance and to confidence in God. Before he died he wrote a letter to his wicked son entreating his forgiveness (as if he were the injurer and the other but his victim); and then, having caused the history of the Passion to be read aloud, he submitted with patience and firmness to his fate.

Michael might now appear to have rid himself of the only lawful claimant of his power; but he was timid and suspicious, as tyrants ever are, and he could not forget that he had still two brothers, who, though as yet but infants, might one day live to avenge their father's quarrel and to take possession of his throne. They were the children of a second marriage, and therefore only half-brothers to the unnatural Michael; the eldest, Francis, was not more than eight years old, and the youngest little better than an infant; but, thanks to the training of their mother, Justa, they possessed a strength of purpose in the matter of religion which might have put older and better instructed Christians to the blush. "Why will you not denounce the God of the Christians?" demanded Michael's heathen wife, pausing in the midst of the treacherous caresses she was lavishing on Francis; but the boy only answered, "that he would rather die;" and, again, when the youngest was urged to put aside the beads which he wore about his neck, he replied, "that he would not, lest people

should say he had renounced the faith." Answers such as these soon set the seal upon their fate. Michael felt, or fancied, that with such a strong bias in favour of the Christian religion, the eyes of all others of that persuasion (and it numbered already almost the entire population of the kingdom) would be fixed upon them as upon their legitimate chieftains. There could be no truce to his jealous fears while they were living, and so they were condemned to die. But while he resolved upon the deed, he yet shrank from the odium which it would attach to his name; and for full two months they were kept immured in the vaults of his own palace, before he ventured to issue the order for their execution.

We are indebted to a Christian servant, by name Ignatius, for a touching account of their last moments, as he afterwards gave the story to the Jesuits at Nangasaki. Accustomed as all Japanese children are from their infancy to the idea of murder, probably they had all along had some presage of their own future fate; for the entire period of their imprisonment seems to have been spent by them in fasting and in prayer. Often their guards could scarcely prevail upon them to eat sufficient for the preservation of life; and the very night upon which they died, Francis subjected himself to an additional abstinence, in punishment for some word or action which he fancied had been unkind to his keeper. Long also after his little brother was fast asleep, moved as it seemed by some hidden impulse, he continued to watch in prayer, until, yielding at length to the remonstrances of his faithful friend Ignatius, the little prince prepared for rest. First, however, he paused in prayer before a pious picture; and Ignatius, knowing what was going to happen, seized the opportunity to praise the practice of recommending the soul to the Blessed Virgin as if it was to be called to its account that very night. Quick as lightning the child acted upon the suggestion, and said aloud, "By the passion and death of Jesus Christ, be mindful of

me this night, O Mary! Mother and mistress of my heart, to you I commend both body and soul, and I put my eternal safety into your hands."

So beautiful and appropriate was this *impromptu* prayer, that it must have seemed as an inspiration to his awe-struck listener; but he might not reveal his emotion; and when the child had taken holy water, and laid himself down to sleep with the sweet names of Jesus and Mary yet trembling on his innocent lips, Ignatius left the room, unable to endure the cruel tragedy which he knew was about to follow. Next morning, when he returned to his post, he found both the infants lying drowned in their own blood; but, with a merciful cruelty, the executioners had stabbed without arousing them from their slumbers, so that they passed from life to death before they had even feared or fancied that a murderer was at hand.

Meanwhile Michael proceeded every day to commit fresh acts of cruelty against the Christians of Arima. Under the guidance of his chief minister Safiori, who in his turn was plotting for the crown, of which Michael himself had robbed his father, he had already pulled down the churches, overthrown the crosses, sent hundreds of the principal Christians into exile, and banished the Jesuit fathers, to whose influence he attributed their constancy in the struggle; and having thus, as he hoped, destroyed every landmark to which they could confidently look for guidance, he published an edict commanding them all to embrace idolatry or die. At the first mutterings of the coming storm, the Christians, by general consent, had enrolled themselves in a confraternity, styled especially "of martyrs," because, besides the usual practices of prayer, fasting, and penance, common to all similar associations, the members pledged themselves to suffer loss of property, banishment, or martyrdom itself, faithfully and joyfully, for the Name of Jesus. This confraternity afterwards extended itself over other parts of Japan; and it was even adopted by the little children, who were destined to play nearly as

prominent a part in the coming persecutions as their parents themselves, and to whom it was therefore given by the Jesuit fathers, with rules and practices adapted to their tender years. Thus prepared and strengthened for the struggle, the Christians waited in patient courage its commencement; and they had not long to wait. A celebrated bonze was sent for to Arima, avowedly for the purpose of reconverting the Christian recusants to the religion of their fathers; but his sermons were unattended, or attended by those who went less to listen than to refute; nor would the Christians even visit him without having their beads suspended from their necks,—a circumstance which caused him all the deeper mortification that the wearing of a rosary was always considered by the Japanese as most unequivocal declaration of Christianity. In vain the king commanded, and the queen received the missionary bonze with every possible reverence and submission at the palace; the very ladies of her court refused obedience. They would not even hearken to the teacher of idolatry; their precious rosaries still sparkled on their necks; and imprisonment, ill-usage, and starvation, were all employed without success to compel them to retract their spirited determination.

Thus foiled and defeated at the very footsteps of his throne, Michael sent for a nobleman of the name of Thomas, renowned for his prowess both by sea and by land, and with every art of persuasion in his power, sought to induce him to yield obedience to his orders. The blunt soldier listened impatiently to the miserable sophisms of his chieftain, and then flatly told him, that as a soldier would be deserving of death for deserting his colours, so he should consider himself the most despicable of human beings, if for fear or favour of earthly monarch he could desert that King of kings to whom on the day of his baptism he had sworn allegiance; ending (so great was his indignation that he could not contain himself) with a rough speech, to the effect that he hated traitors as he hated treason, and would prefer

death itself to the baseness of committing the one, or of being associated with the other. Such a speech to such a man the Christian well knew could only be uttered at the hazard of his head; no sooner, therefore, had he left the royal presence, than he sent for one of the Jesuit fathers, then lying hid in the city, and prepared himself for death. When urged by his friends, for his own sake, and for the sake of his family, who would otherwise be involved in his ruin, to seek safety by flight, he answered with characteristic spirit, "that so far from flying martyrdom, he would go to the end of the earth to seek it; and that he loved his children all too well to think of depriving them of a blessing which he coveted for himself above the empire of the world."

The next day the governor of the city invited him to dinner (so strangely do they manage these affairs in Japan); and Thomas, well aware of his approaching fate, took an affectionate farewell of his wife and children before accepting the ominous invitation. While he sat at table, his host presented him with a sword, asking his opinion as to its capabilities for the decapitation of a human head. Thomas, looking at it carelessly, pronounced it well made, and fitted for such a work; whereupon the governor, receiving it out of his hands, stabbed him dead on the spot. A few hours afterwards his brother, quite as uncompromising a Christian as himself, suffered a similar fate; his mother Martha and his two young sons were also condemned; while his wife and daughter were, by a caprice of mercy, or perhaps of cruelty, exempted from the sentence. Very different from the ordinary effects of such opposite judgments were the feelings elicited by them on the present occasion: those who were to die blessed God, in an ecstasy of pious joy, that He had called them to suffer for the faith; while she who was to live —a widow, and now all but childless—gave way to an agony of grief at the double loss she was destined to endure. While she wept over her cruel lot, Martha called her grandchildren, and embracing them tenderly,

told them, that as their father had died for Jesus Christ, so she and they were now to do the same, and then to go and live with him in heaven. The children quietly answered, "that there was nothing which they wished for better;" asking, at the same time, "when it was to be." "Just now," she said; "so go and take leave of your mother, and prepare yourselves for death." With smiling countenances, the children hastened to obey; and having distributed their toys among their playfellows, and made some parting presents to their nurses, they clothed themselves in the white robes which Martha had taken care to provide for the occasion, and knelt before their mother, saying, "Adieu, dear mother; we are going to be martyred." She was weeping at the instant as if her very heart would break; but fearing to discourage her children, or cast the shadow of her own maternal grief over their coming hour of trial, she embraced them, saying, "Go, dear children; and remembering Him who died for you, tread courageously in the footsteps of your father and your uncle. Behold them stretching out their arms to help you; behold the saints and angels with crowns prepared to set upon your heads; behold Jesus Christ Himself inviting you to His most sweet embraces; and when you reach the place of execution, show yourselves to be indeed His followers by your contempt of death. Fall on your knees, loosen your collars, join your hands, bow down your heads, and cry out Jesus! Mary! with your latest breath. Oh, how wretched am I that I cannot be with you in that hour!" Then, hiding her face in the arms of her little ones, the poor mother burst into an uncontrollable fit of weeping, moving the very soldiers to such compassion, that, fearful of yielding to their feelings, they tore the children from her embraces, and almost threw them into the palanquin which was to convey them and their grandmother to the place of execution. During the short transit thither, that venerable Christian took care to occupy the little victims in prayer and pious ejaculations; nor did she cease her guardian-care

when they reached the fatal spot; for she stood and saw them one by one butchered before her eyes, and then, advancing with a grave and stately pace, she in her turn submitted to the sword.

After this execution, eight of the principal citizens of Arima were summoned to the presence of their king, and there commanded to abjure the faith; while he, persecuting tyrant as he was, had the face to tell them that he only required an external submission, since he too was in heart a Christian like themselves, though compelled for the present by the emperor's orders to conceal his faith. Five out of the eight agreed to this infamous proposal; but four of them afterwards sincerely repented. The others were not to be cajoled out of their convictions, and were consequently condemned with their families to the penalty of fire. As soon as their sentence was made known at Nangasaki, one of the Fathers came privately to Arima to give spiritual succour to the captives, and thousands of Christians also flocked from every part of the country to witness their execution.

Never before perhaps had the Church presented such a spectacle to the world; and possibly never will she offer such another again. For three whole days that vast multitude remained camped in the open fields, patiently waiting for the execution of their brethren: but their presence struck terror into the heart of the craven king; and dreading lest they should either rescue the prisoners or seize upon the town, he faltered in his purpose. It never occurred to him that they of whom he feared such things would as soon have thought of robbing him of his material crown as of depriving the martyrs of their palm; they had, in fact, been careful to come without even their ordinary weapons of defence, in order to avoid the possibility of a doubt as to their peaceable intentions; and no sooner did they suspect the cause of the delay, than some of the gravest of their number waited on the governor to explain that they were merely there to witness the ceremony, and to

promise that there should be neither tumult nor resistance if they were permitted to remain. Thus encouraged and reassured, preparations for the martyrdom went on apace. A wide plain just beneath the castle of the town was chosen for the purpose; the prisoners were confessed and communicated by a Jesuit father; and on the day appointed they came forth, dressed in their robes of ceremony, and with their hands tied behind their backs, accompanied by upwards of 40,000 Christians, bearing lights in their hands and garlands on their heads, and singing the Litanies of our Blessed Lady as they went along. Among the victims was a boy not more than eleven years old, and a young girl called Magdalen, who having already made a vow of virginity, had always led a life holy and pure as that of the martyr-virgins of old.

These children, as well as their elder companions, all affectionately embraced the stakes to which they were afterwards tied; then Gaspar, the chief of the Confraternity of Martyrs, unrolling a banner upon which was displayed a figure of the Son of God, bound like themselves to a pillar, made them a brief exhortation to perseverance; and even as he was speaking, fire was set to the piles of combustible materials, which had been laid at a considerable distance from the martyrs, for the cruel purpose of prolonging their tortures. As the first gleam of this fearful element of death shot upwards to the skies, the entire multitude fell with one accord upon their knees; and still, as the fire drew near its victims, the plain re-echoed with the oft-repeated "Jesus! Mary!" —"Jesus! Mary!" of the spectators, who sadly struck their breasts in penance for their own sins, and to obtain the grace of perseverance for their brethren. Nearer and nearer yet it hurried; but even above the roar of the rapidly-approaching flames, and the sighs and lamentations of those who watched them, the voice of the martyrs might be heard, praising God, and animating each other to constancy and courage. At length the fiery sea had reached them, and their cords were

burst; and then every eye was riveted on the child, to see whether he would stand of his own free will in that burning scorching furnace. A moment's pause—he leaves his stake; but it is only to run through the dense flames, until he has reached and flung his arms around his mother; while the young Magdalen avails herself of her freedom to stoop to the burning embers, and, picking up the living coals, set them as a garland of roses on her head. She died almost in the very effort; but the mother of the child James, with a heroism of even perhaps a higher order, found strength in the midst of her own tortures to speak words of courage to her little one, until death released them from their sufferings. The flames had scorched the bodies, but had not consumed them; and they were carried off, together with the blackened and half-burnt stakes, as precious relics by the assembled Christians. The bodies were laid to rest in the church of Nangasaki; where over their honoured graves was afterwards erected a monument, telling alike of their heroic end, and calling upon all who read to follow in their footsteps.

The tiger had now thoroughly tasted blood; and he hesitated no longer. Execution after execution followed in Arima; until the infatuated Michael was deluded into resigning his kingdom to the Kumbo, and demanding another in its stead. The arch-traitor who guided his counsels had led him to believe that by this manœuvre the emperor would be induced to assign to him a larger and wealthier government: but the result only proved the folly of the king and the acuteness of his adviser; for Michael, to his inexpressible mortification, was remanded to an inferior kingdom,—while that of Arima was bestowed upon Safiori, who from first to last had been plotting his destruction.

CHAPTER VIII.

Treachery of Dutch Protestants. General persecution of the Christians. Heroic conduct of Christian virgins. The Jesuits and others banished from Miako. Exile and death of Justo Ucondono. More fierce and universal persecution. Particulars of the sufferings of the martyrs at Cochinotzu, Nangasaki, Miako, and elsewhere.

THE year 1614 dawned darkly on the prospects of the Church of Japan; for with it commenced that direct imperial persecution, which, however it might now and then be modified by circumstances, yet never really ceased its efforts, until by the stake or by the sword, by the boiling waters of Ungen or the frozen rivers of Xindai, the last germs of Christianity had been rooted out of the soil. Up to this period the Kumbo had been content, by a nicely-adjusted system of neutrality, to countenance, without absolutely authorising, the cruelties of the inferior kings; but unhappily the events of each succeeding year had added strength and consistency to his own suspicions of the Christians. The Spanish captain had by his boasting cast the seed; the vast and ever-increasing possessions of his nation in the Indies and elsewhere had fostered it in the bud; but to the Protestants of Holland was reserved the honour or the infamy of carefully cherishing into fullest vigour that fell upas-tree of suspicion, beneath whose deadly shade the Christianity of Japan was destined to expire.

Never, perhaps, since that dark hour when Christ Himself was sold for silver to the Jews, had the doctrines which He came to teach been betrayed more deliberately, or in a more wholesale manner, than upon this occasion. For the wicked, or perhaps only the inconsiderate word of one of her careless sons, Spain had given in atone-

ment the blood of her missionaries, the treasures of her kings, the charities and prayers of thousands of her people. Portugal might boast that Christianity was indebted for the very fact of its existence in Japan to the zeal and exertions of her merchant-princes. They it was who had brought Anger to the feet of Xavier, and Xavier himself to the court of the Satsumian monarch; they it was who had reverently escorted him into the presence-chamber of the almost inapproachable Kumbo; they it was who had put back to Bongo to rescue or to die with their saintly missionary, when wind and tide had already carried them far from the murderous machinations of the bonzes; and finally, they it was too, who, not once only, but on many occasions, setting the interests of Jesus above those of their own material commerce, left a rich and luxurious city to traffic at a poorer port, in order that they might thereby encourage the liberal sentiments of the ruler in the one case, or repress by motives of personal gain the persecuting designs of a despot in the other. The glory of Portugal may have gone out of her, and the names of such men as the Gamas and Alvarez may no longer be inscribed on the annals of her kingdom; but the virtues of the dead are not to be effaced by the degeneracy of the living; and wherever honest history is read, or truth prevails over the distorted fictions of prejudice and error, the crime of treading out the expiring embers of Christianity in Japan will be a stain on the shield of Holland; while of the Portuguese it must still be written, that but for their fostering charity, and unprompted and most disinterested zeal, thousands of noble-hearted martyrs would never have won their palms, and thousands and tens of thousands of saintly and most faithful Christians would have lived and died, and been gathered to their fathers, unsanctified by the saving waters of baptism, unblest by the knowledge and love of Jesus Christ. Had the Dutchmen been heathens, there might have been something to reprobate, but nothing to wonder at in their conduct; but they were Christians, pledged

by that name, and by all which that name implies, to the belief that faith in the Redeemer is necessary to salvation; yet they acted towards Christianity the part of Judas, and for the same mean motive; and it was an evil hour for the Japanese, and for their children, and their children's children, when love of lucre brought the money-minded men of Protestant Holland to traffic on their shores. Small chance had they with their cloth, and cheese (which latter the Japanese never eat), and their other useful but homely wares, of winning the favour of this luxurious people from the ships of Spain and Portugal, laden as they ever were with the treasures of the Indies; and no sooner did they become cognisant of this fact, than, with a worldly wisdom as far-seeing as its morality was detestable, they resolved, if they could not successfully compete with their rivals, treacherously to drive them from the market altogether.

The unlucky saying of the Spaniard had long since become a sort of bye-word in the nation; and quite as patent to the people were the suspicions it had engendered in the minds of their rulers. The Dutchmen (and there was an Englishman among them too) seized upon the calumny, and plying the Kumbo with false and exaggerated tales of the ambition of the King of Spain, maliciously represented the missionaries to be mere political emissaries in his pay, saying that they were men so notorious for intrigue as to have been long since banished from England, Sweden, Denmark, Holland, and, in fact, from every country where the monarch valued his authority, or wished to keep possession of his crown. This foul slander speedily produced its proper and expected fruit.

If Christian kings feared Christian priests, what had not he, an idolater, to dread from their machinations? And if Christian kings were not ashamed to drive Christian priests out of their dominions, why should he, the emperor of a heathen land, ruling too over bonzes most hostile to their teaching, hesitate to do so also? In fact, he did not hesitate. Persecution was almost

instantly resolved on; but as it was found, on inquiry, that the palace itself was filled with Christians, he was obliged to commence the projected work among the members of his own household. Fourteen of those more immediately in attendance on his own person or that of the queen, were driven into banishment; and among them was that Corean Julia, who from the desolate rock to which she was exiled, wrote such wonderful things to the Jesuit fathers of the consolation with which her soul was overflowing in the midst of her desert; and Didaques, a young man of such holy mind and innocent manners, that his very name had passed into a proverb for purity among the heathens; and to say that such a one had become a "Didaques," was only the familiar mode of expressing that he had passed from the vices of a heathen court to a more edifying and exemplary way of living.

The first blow was now struck; and in the Kumbo's present disposition but little was needed to ensure its repetition. The attendance of the Jesuit fathers at the execution of a Christian criminal gave great offence, and a hasty order was immediately issued for the burning alive of every person who would not conform to the religion of the state. Miako, like the palace, was filled with converts; and the next morning innumerable stakes, set by the Christians each at the door of his own dwelling, gave notice that nearly half the population of the city would rather die than deny the faith. The execution of the sentence would have made a desert of Miako; it was not even to be thought of, and every effort was therefore made to reduce them by other means to obedience. Bribes, threats, and stratagems, were tried alternately, and tried in vain; and then followed every possible species of violence short of the actual infliction of death. Men, women, and children of every age and rank, were tied naked into sacks partially filled with sharp straws and other wounding substances; and after having been carried about the town upon men's shoulders, exposed to the jeers and

insults of the mob, were thrown aside with as little ceremony as if they had been indeed sacks of straw, being sometimes left for more than twenty-four hours at a time exposed to the cold and biting air of winter, piled and huddled one upon another in such a careless fashion, that many of them narrowly escaped with life. This disgraceful treatment was practised towards even certain pious women who had taken vows of chastity and lived in community, spending their time in deeds of charity and devotion. Moreover, with that hatred of all that is holy and pure which from the days of Cain to the present hour has been the tribute that vice ever pays to virtue, a still deeper ignominy was reserved for these pure virgins,—the same that had been prepared for some of the Christian virgins of ancient Rome. But He who had clothed an Agnes with a halo of light to defend her against those who sought to rob her of her dearest treasure, was not wanting to these Christian maidens of Japan, who so earnestly invoked His help. He did not indeed interpose miraculously in their behalf. but He inspired them with a courage still more miraculous; and when the tempters came to seek their prey, they found them so bleeding and disfigured by the wounds which they had inflicted on their own faces, that in horror and disgust they were fain to withdraw. Such scenes as these were afterwards frequently repeated in other parts of the empire, not merely upon religious women, but also upon those whose social ties still retained them in the world; and always and in all places every attempt to degrade them was met by those defenceless beings in the same undaunted spirit of resistance which had saved them at Miako; while on the other hand, in one or two instances it elicited acts of apostasy from men, who, although they had heroically endured scourge and torture in their own persons, yet lacked the necessary faith and courage to endure the insults heaped on their wives and daughters.

Enraged at finding himself foiled in every attempt by the constancy of the Christians, the Kumbo proceeded

to banish them by hundreds, not merely out of Miako, but out of Japan; and in this sentence the Jesuit and Franciscan fathers were formally included. Fortunately most of the former, in anticipation of some such event, had been dispersed throughout the country in various disguises: but it was impossible for those living openly in the college to evade it; and a sad day it was, both for them and for their flock, when they found themselves forced to depart from a Church, which in sunshine and in storm they had now governed for upwards of fifty years. Fifty years it was indeed since Father Villela had, by his heroic patience, won the city to his mission; and though during this long lapse of time the Jesuits had occasionally been compelled to leave it, the intervals of their absence were so few, and of such short duration, that they could not be said to have ever really relinquished it. They had dwelt there in peace, even when persecution was rife in other kingdoms of the country; and their college, which had existed since the days of Nobunanga, had become the resort alike of all classes of Christians as well as of heathens,—of the rich as well as of the poor,—of men of courtly lives, as well as of those of learning or of commerce. Some sought them for the knowledge of Jesus Christ; others for instruction in mathematics and astronomy,—sciences for which the Society has ever been justly renowned; indeed, so great was the thirst of the Japanese for learning, that if the Jesuits had chosen to throw aside their missionary character, and to apply themselves entirely to the work of secular instruction, they would have easily succeeded in monopolising to themselves the highest honours and emoluments of the state. That they did not do so is at once the sign and seal of their missionary vocation, and the only answer needed to the foul slander of their calumniators, both ancient and modern.*

* The Japanese still retained an earnest desire to acquire that knowledge which was denied them by the exclusiveness of their government and customs. Even in the year 1855, a Dutchman, named Laxman, was bribed into pledging himself to remain among them, residing at Yeddo, employed in the construction of charts,

Such was the respect and reverence in which they were held even by their most determined enemies in the court of Japan, that they were permitted to say a farewell Mass publicly in their church, and afterwards to receive the adieus of their sorrowful flock. Vast multitudes attended upon this occasion; and when High Mass was over, the Jesuits proceeded to the mournful ceremony of stripping the altars, the people weeping piteously all the while, and the fathers nearly as broken-hearted as themselves. All was at length removed that could tempt to sacrilege; the sacred vessels and robes of ceremony were confided to the care of such of the Christians as could best be relied on, the church-doors flung open for all who might choose to enter; and the next morning the fathers, under a guard of soldiers, were far on their way to Nangasaki, where Safiori had gladly undertaken the task of their embarkation. At that town they were joined by such numbers of prisoners, both clerical and lay, collected from all parts of the country, that finally sixty-three Jesuits, with a crowd of converts of every age, sex, and condition, were embarked for Macao; while twenty-three others, besides a proportionate number of Franciscans, Dominicans, and Augustinians (for each of these orders had now missions in Japan), were despatched to the Manillas.

With these last went Justo Ucondono and his family, again in poverty and disgrace for the sake of Jesus Christ; but this time with the additional hardship of a sentence of exile from his native shores. Most of the missionaries with whom he was embarked returned at different intervals, and in various disguises, to Japan. He remained at the Manillas, where he had been received by the governor with all the courtesy and affection due to a man of such tried and eminent merit; though so natural to his own true-hearted zeal did his conduct appear, that to the last day of his life he never

and making astronomical observations. A few years later the door was again opened to strangers, and many a missionary with the rest.

could understand why or wherefore such honour had been lavished upon him. "I have done nothing for the King of Spain," he was wont to say with a kind of blunt simplicity; "why then should I look for favours at his hand?" And when the governor offered to procure a pension for him, he answered, with all the true instinct of a martyr, "That he never would consent to receive again at the hand of man that which he had abandoned in spirit as well as in fact for the love of God." So also, when a little while afterwards he lay upon his deathbed, he set the seal and crown upon a life of self-denial and devotion in these noble words, his last and only legacy to his children: "I bequeath them nothing, and I recommend them to no man's care; it is enough of riches, and enough of honour, that they have suffered for the faith of Jesus Christ." And in sentiments such as these he breathed his last, surrounded by the best and noblest of whom the Manillas could boast; the governor of the island, with the chief officers of his suite, bearing his body to the grave amid honours which would have better suited a monarch than a private man, if that man had not been Justo Ucondono banished for the faith.

In the same year (1614) in which this wholesale banishment took place, the Christians had to mourn for the death of Lewis Cerquiera, Bishop of Japan. He had succeeded to this office on the demise of Peter Martinez, with whom he came over, and whose coadjutor he had been; and he is said to have literally died of a broken heart for the ruin that had fallen on the infant Church committed to his love and care. It is true, indeed, that from the first he had undertaken the task in times of great difficulty and danger; but at the period of his arrival, though there was much to discourage, there had also been much to strengthen and to cheer his heart. From Nangasaki, where he had fixed his residence, he had succeeded in making innumerable journeys to the most distant parts of the kingdom; and whithersoever he went, thousands had flocked around him for

instruction and confirmation. No kingdom or city was too distant, no road too untrodden, no mountains too high or too rugged to be accessible to his zeal; and when he returned from these weary wanderings, he could sit down at Nangasaki, and feel that there at least Almighty God had the entire homage of all hearts; for not only was it wholly inhabited by Christians, but the five parishes into which it was divided were governed by native pastors, the truest test of the conversion of a people, and one which only the Catholic Church has ever succeeded in presenting to the world in the history of the propagation of the Christian faith.

Sadly had this fair scene changed within the last few years, and rapidly had all that was brightest and best disappeared from the picture. At the moment of the bishop's death, the emperor had fulminated his final edict against the Christians. Figo, Amanguchi, and Firando were already deluged in their blood; Nangasaki was the head-quarters of Safiori, their implacable foe, and an army of ten thousand men had been let loose upon Arima, to exterminate religion by fire and sword. Whenever any of these troops were sent into a district, a judgment-seat, surrounded by a palisade, was set up in the most public place of the city; the best known among the Christians were then dragged by the hair and cast into the enclosure, thrown upon the ground, trampled under-foot, beaten until they were half-dead, and their legs, by a cruel contrivance, broken between two pieces of wood; the most intrepid were then put to death, and their bodies, being cut into pieces, were cast to the birds of prey. At Cochinotzu sixty Christians were taken, five and five at a time, with their hands tied behind them, lifted high up into the air, and then dashed upon the ground with so much violence, that blood gushed from the ears, eyes, and mouths of the sufferers. Many of them were dreadfully lacerated, others had all their bones broken; and as if this were not already sufficient torture, they were afterwards pricked and pierced with sharp instruments all over their

bodies. The governor all the while was exhorting them with affected compassion to spare themselves further torments by renouncing their religion; but when he found that they were deaf to his entreaties, he proceeded to inflict a new punishment, so horrible that it is difficult to conceive the cruelty of the mind by which it was invented. The victim being made to lie flat on the ground, a stone, which four men could scarcely lift, was placed on his back; and then, by means of a pulley, with cords attached to the legs and arms, he was raised from the earth in such a manner that the body was bent completely backwards, the limbs cruelly crushed and broken, and in many instances the eyes forced out of their sockets; the fingers and toes of the victims were then cut off, the teeth knocked out, and if the eyesight yet remained, it was now destroyed. Many were not beheaded until death had indeed become a mercy; while others, less fortunate, after undergoing a yet further mutilation of their persons, were compelled in the midst of their agony to climb up and down a flight of stairs for the amusement of their tormentors; after which they were consigned to the care of their friends, until one by one, as the strength of their constitutions more or less prolonged the struggle of death, they passed from their painful martyrdom to the crowns prepared for them in heaven.

The bloody scenes of Cochinotzu were only a sample of those which likewise desolated Aria, Obama, Simabara, Swota, and every other city of note in the kingdom of Arima; but more especially the capital, where Safiori presided in person over the cruelties which he had invented for his victims. For a little while, however, he was interrupted in this pleasant pastime by the revolt of Fideyori, the son of the late emperor, who had at length resolved upon asserting his right to the crown; but the subsequent defeat and death of that unfortunate prince putting an end to the war, Safiori returned to Arima, again to attempt the eradication of a religion which had become thoroughly fixed and rooted in

the hearts of the people. His success, however, not keeping pace with his zeal, he was finally disgraced, and his kingdom given to another. Meanwhile, in the second year of the persecution, the Kumbosama died, and was succeeded by his son, under the title of the Xoguno, who proved to be a far more dangerous and inexorable foe than any who had as yet been opposed to the Christians. More cruel in disposition, more determined and prompt in action, and gifted with far more acuteness and penetration, he seized at once upon a truth which his father had only recognised when dying, namely, that whatever number of Christians he might put to death, he would never succeed in extirpating their religion so long as one Christian priest was left in the country to fortify the confessors, to animate the martyrs, and to baptise and instruct the infidels, whom each fresh deed of heroism, instead of deterring, gathered by hundreds into the Church. The shepherd must be smitten if the sheep were to be dispersed;—such was the deep and deadly policy contained in the late Kumbo's deathbed exhortation; and from that hour, though merciless butchery was still the portion of all the Christians, the chief weight of the Xoguno's arm fell upon their pastors. The law by which he proceeded to effect his purpose bore a considerable affinity to that enforced in England nearly at the same time, and with a similar intention. To prevent any further addition from without to the number of the missionaries already in the kingdom, all the ports of Japan were irrevocably closed against the vessels of Europe, with the exception indeed of Nangasaki and Firando, which were always under the rigid surveillance of the officers of the Xoguno. It was also made death to be convicted as a priest, or to be discovered in the exercise of priestly functions; death to introduce a priest into the kingdom, and death to give him shelter; death not only to the person so exercising hospitality, but likewise to his ten next neighbours, with their innocent wives and children,—a reward being generally offered for the discovery of those who, in any

of these ways, should have incurred the penalties of the law. From that hour the life of each individual priest was at the mercy of every one to whom he had been previously known; while the lives of those who sheltered him were equally liable to be forfeit to the curiosity or cupidity of such of their neighbours as might chance to discover the fact of their delinquency. Immediately upon the promulgation of this edict, many of the missionaries, in order to avoid compromising the safety of their brethren, left the towns, and went out to dwell in the woods and deserts; and in this way one of them lived for twenty years, like a veritable St. John the Baptist, in the wilderness; while others took up their abode in caves, grottoes, deserted stables, or cupboards and cells constructed for them by the faithful in the recesses of their own houses, without other light than such as a chance chink in the boards might give, or other food save that which at rare intervals could be conveyed to them by those to whose charity and courage they were indebted for their shelter. In these hiding-places they were often compelled to remain for several weeks together; one of them dwelt during the intensest heat of summer no less than sixty days in just such a cell as we have described; but at night they used to sally forth to visit and instruct their flocks, to baptise children and converts, to anoint the sick and dying, and, in short, to do as much of their missionary duties as their cramped and perilous circumstances would admit of. But the eyes of the whole nation were upon them; and though care and caution might avail them for a time, sooner or later the tyrant was certain of seizing on his prey. To Father John Baptist Machades, a Jesuit, and Father Peter, a Franciscan, the honour was accorded of taking the first place on this long list of priestly victims. The former was going to Omura by order of his superior, when he and his catechist were made prisoners at Goto, and sent by sea to the capital. Contrary winds, however, detaining them at Canomi, the magistrates of that place received Father Machades on his

landing with every mark of courtesy and kindness. An unrestricted communication was permitted with the Christians, who flocked to him in crowds; and after the due administration of the Sacraments he made them a most spirit-stirring address, in the course of which he told them, that even so early as seven years of age he had been moved by some secret impulse to a strong desire of preaching the Gospel to the Japanese.

These duties having been fulfilled, the father returned of his own accord to his prison on board the ship. But so great was the veneration inspired by his virtues, that the very sailors refused to bind him as he wished; and thus unshackled, and almost unwatched, he remained until he arrived at the prisons of Omura. There he found a Franciscan father lying under the same sentence of death as himself; and great was the jubilee with which these holy missionaries greeted each other in their dungeon, and sweet and holy the conferences which they often held together upon the subject of their approaching martyrdom. And when at length the mandate came, and they knew that they were to die that night, Father Peter told, in his simple-hearted gladness, how he had made this the object of all his prayers ever since he had entered the prison; while in the same spirit of holy exultation, Machades declared he had known three really happy days in his life, that on which he had entered the Society, that on which he had put on chains for Jesus Christ, and now this, incomparably the happiest and most glorious of all, on which his name was to be inscribed among the martyrs of the Church. They both declined the food which the Prince of Omura, with a touch of unwonted courtesy towards Christians, sent them before nightfall; and then, having previously confessed and communicated each other, they set out to the place of execution,—each carrying his crucifix and exhorting the crowd as they went along, until the final moment came, when each affectionately embraced the other, and then in peace and joyfulness submitted to his sentence. Theirs was the first execution of

priests which had taken place since the days of Teigo-Sama; and probably it was this fact, coupled with the long train of future evils which it unfolded to their vision, that caused a grief so overwhelming among the Christians present on the occasion as to excite the pity of the executioners themselves, and to induce them to permit their carrying away the bodies of the martyrs unmolested.

About the same time six other religious commenced a still longer captivity in the prisons of Omura. Three were Dominicans, one a Franciscan, and the two others Jesuits, Father Charles Spinola, and Ambrose Fernandez, a Brother of the Society. When first they were taken prisoners they had been thrown for greater security into a sort of subterranean cave, where they lay huddled together and deprived of light; nor was their condition much improved by their removal to a prison, which, like all similar buildings in Japan, left them exposed to the changes of the weather, and in which, by another cruel regulation, they were so scantily supplied with food and clothing that many of them frequently fainted away from weakness and exhaustion. Even their jailors were sometimes moved to pity, and permitted the Christians to enter with food; but this connivance being discovered by their superiors, they were compelled to swear that it should not happen again. One of them, however, was a Christian; and as he refused to swear by Xaca and Amida, the unlawful oaths administered to his companions, he met with a martyr's fate on the following morning. Thus effectually deprived of every succour from without, the prisoners nevertheless contrived to lead a life of angelic happiness within the walls of their dreary prison. Every day the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, meditation, and pious reading, succeeded each other with as much regularity as if they had been still in the cloistered security of a religious house; nor were their voluntary austerities suspended, because mingled of necessity with all the involuntary hardships of a convict's life. The discipline

was in frequent use among them, and even their scanty food was considerably retrenched by their frequent fastings; while during the four years he remained a captive, Father Spinola always wore a hair shirt, which he never could be prevailed upon to lay aside, even during the many and severe illnesses consequent upon the privations of his prison. All his religious life, indeed, had been marked by the same persevering practice of personal austerity. During his long residence in Japan he had lived entirely upon rice and ill-boiled herbs, nor had he ever allowed himself the use of fruit; although in the summer-season of that eastern climate it is not only one of the greatest of luxuries, but almost one of the necessaries of life. From his childhood also he had dreamed of martyrdom as other children dream of pleasures and of toys: it was this which drew him to Japan as soon as he had finished his studies for the priesthood; it was this which made him, however indulgent and considerate for others, so uniformly severe to himself; and it was this which, on his first entrance into the prisons of Omura, forced him to exclaim, in all the overflowing fervour of his spirit, "Behold the place of my rest: here will I abide, because I have chosen it."

It was not until the close of the year 1622, that an order arrived for the removal of these religious and other Christian prisoners to Nangasaki, and for their subsequent execution. They were thirty in number as they marched out of Omura; and, partly by sea and partly by land, each with a rope round his neck,* and

* The binding of a Japanese prisoner is by no means a simple or painless affair. Cords of about the thickness of a finger are used in the first instance, and these are overlaid by others much smaller, and, of course, more painful. They are fastened by a regulated number of knots and nooses round the breast, neck, and arms; the hands are bound together, the elbows nearly touch each other, and all the ends of these various ties are united to one long cord held by the executioner. The slightest effort to escape thus brings the elbows completely into contact; and tightening the noose round the neck of the unhappy prisoner almost to strangulation, effectually prevents him from accomplishing his object.

an executioner at his side, they went on their way to the old city of the Christians. It was not considered prudent that they should enter Nangasaki, so the inhabitants went forth in multitudes to meet them, and flinging themselves at their feet, begged with many tears their blessings and their prayers; and thus escorted, the martyrs stood at length upon that high hill between the city and the sea, where just twenty-six years before the martyrs of Teigo-Sama had accomplished their doom. A moment of suspense followed. Some victim or spectator was yet wanting to the solemnity; and every eye was directed towards the town, from whence a troop of persons might be descried approaching,—men, women, and children; thirty of the former, with, of course, a far larger proportion of the latter. Every doubt as to the ultimate destination of this company soon vanished, when it was seen that they were dressed in their robes of ceremony, and with looks of gladness and of holy joy were ascending to the calvary of the Christians. One of the new-comers had been guilty of giving shelter to a missionary; the others were his ten next neighbours, with their families, besides the wives and children of some previous martyrs; and of this almost incredible number of victims, amounting to upwards of a hundred, some were to be beheaded, while others were to perish by the slower martyrdom of fire. A throne had been erected overlooking this scene of slaughter; and when the governor had taken his seat upon it, those who were to undergo the sentence of fire were fastened to their stakes, but loosely, in order that they might escape if only they chose to apostatise, and then the executioners prepared to decapitate the others. Among these last was Isabella, the widow of the man in whose house Father Spinola had been taken captive, and her son Ignatius, a child now about four years old, but at that time a new-born infant, whom he had baptised on the very evening before his arrest. From the stake to which he was already bound, the father had been exhorting both natives and

Portuguese to perseverance, telling them, almost in a spirit of prophecy, that they need not look for any cessation in the persecution, which would go on increasing in fury from day to day; when chancing to see Isabella standing in the crowd, and anxious for the fate of her child, he suddenly cried out, "Where then is my little Ignatius?" The mother held him up, exclaiming, "Here he is, my father, ready and glad to die for Jesus;" and then addressing the infant, she bade him ask the blessing of the good father, who in the waters of baptism had conferred upon him a spiritual life infinitely more precious than that which he was now about to forfeit for his God. Instantly the little creature fell upon his knees, joining his tiny hands together, as if he would supplicate the blessing of the father. So touching in its simplicity was this little scene, that the crowd, already interested by the movement of the mother, now broke into such open murmurs of compassion, that they were obliged to proceed at once to the execution, in order to prevent the possibility of any attempt at a rescue. Two or three heads had already fallen close by the child's side, and now his mother's followed; yet it was observed that he neither shrank nor changed colour, but his turn being next, he fell upon his knees, loosened (for there was no one to do the office for him) with his infant but untrembling fingers the collar that would have impeded the aim of the executioner, and without a cry or murmur submitted to the sword.

The remaining victims were speedily despatched; and their heads having been placed opposite to such of their companions as were to die at the stakes, fire was set to the piles of wood by which the latter were surrounded. With the usual diabolical ingenuity of the Japanese pagans, the faggots had been placed full five-and-twenty feet from the stakes; and whenever the fire was seen to gain too fast upon its victims, water was cast upon it, that inch by inch they might taste the full agony of the sentence to which they had been con-

demned. Many of them died from the mere effects of the heated atmosphere;—among others, Father Rimura, a Japanese priest, after having lived for full three hours in the midst of the flames; and Father Spinola also, whose body was afterwards found unburnt, and wrapped in his soutane, which was literally glued to the flesh by the combined action of the heat and of the water which had been cast upon his person.

Terrible beyond expression as their sufferings must have been, two only of this heroic company showed the slightest symptoms of being even conscious of its anguish. Both were Japanese, and very young; and both simultaneously, and as if from an absolute physical inability to endure such frightful torture any longer, rushed out of the flames, and threw themselves at the feet of the governor, imploring his mercy. They did not, however, ask for life; they asked only for an easier and quicker death. But, poor as the boon was, it was denied them, save upon the condition of apostasy, which they would not accept; and again they were flung back into the flames.

This martyrdom, which was distinguished among the Japanese as the "Great Martyrdom," on account both of the rank and number of its victims, had been preceded by another at Miako, which took place under circumstances of peculiar barbarity. One of the victims was in daily expectation of giving birth to a child; nevertheless she was included in the sentence which sent her husband, a nobleman of the highest rank, and their six young children, with upwards of forty other Christians, to the stake.

The tragical situation in which she was placed had, however, no terrors for this heroic woman. She employed her prison-hours in preparing robes for herself and her children to wear at their execution; and when she was brought to the destined place, calmly, and without assistance, she stepped from the cart, and, throwing a rich mantle over her shoulders, prepared to suffer with a modesty and composure that won her the ad-

miration of all beholders. It was dark night before fire was set to their several piles; but as soon as the smoke had cleared away, the martyrs were seen by the light of the bright flames amid which they stood, with eyes fixed on heaven and forms motionless and erect, as though they had been figures chiselled out of stone.

In very horror the spectators were silent, and the stillness and hush of death was upon the midnight air, when suddenly from out of that fiery furnace a flood of melody was poured,—men and women and children singing the praises of the living God as sweetly, and with notes as true, as though the red and thirsty flames had been but the dews of heaven upon their brows. The sighs and prayers of the assistants, which could no longer be repressed, the shouts and execrations of the soldiers and executioners soon mingled with this death-song; and these, and the dark night, and the fierce fire that illuminated its gloom, now flashing intolerable light upon the victims, now glancing lividly on the pale faces and shrinking forms of the densely-packed spectators, altogether formed a union of sights and sounds that alternately swayed the feelings to terror and compassion. But the music of that marvellous choir died gradually away; and the sudden failing of each gladsome voice, the silent sinking of each upright form, telling that another and yet another had yielded to their doom, was marked by the watchers with redoubled lamentations; though their tenderest sympathies were still reserved for the mother dying in the midst of her little ones.

From the cross to which they had bound her, Thecla (for such was her name) still kept her eyes fixed upon her children, animating them by gentle smiles and words of comfort to suffer well; while the youngest, an infant only three years old, she held with almost superhuman courage in her arms during the whole of the terrible scene that followed. Her own anguish had no power to extort a single sigh from her lips; but those who watched her wept to see the use-

less efforts which she made to diminish the sufferings of her babe. She caressed it, soothed it, hushed its cries, wiped away its tears, sought with her own hands to shelter its tender face from the terrible contact of the fire, and died at last with the little victim so closely folded to her bosom, that it was almost impossible to separate the mother and the child.

These martyrdoms are only specimens of those which during this period continually took place in Japan. Some Christians were crucified, others burnt, others beheaded; numbers again branded upon the cheeks and forehead with the sign of the cross, their fingers and toes cut off, and their eyes forced out; and thus maimed and helpless, they were sent back to their families, who (to their honour be it written) never failed to receive them with all the more pride and affection, the more deeply and hideously they had been disfigured for the sake of Jesus.

CHAPTER IX.

Sufferings of the clergy. Diminution of their number, and consequently of the Christians generally. Martyrdom of Fathers Paul, Angelis, and others; some at the stake, others in freezing water, and others by unheard-of tortures. The sulphurous waters of Ungen. Death of the Xoguno. He is succeeded by a still more cruel tyrant. Treachery of the Dutch. Portuguese merchants forbidden to land; murder of Portuguese ambassadors. Last efforts of Jesuit missionaries, who are all martyred.

THE law which the Xoguno had introduced against the Christian priesthood, soon began to tell rapidly and with fatal effect upon their numbers, and of course upon the prosperity of the Church committed to their keeping. So long as there were left missionaries enough to aid them, neither fire nor sword had prevented the progress of religion among the infidels; and even in the first three years of the persecution, when the panic might be supposed to be at its height, it has been calculated that no less than 15,000 persons were received into the bosom of the Church; but now, thinned by persecution from within, and prevented by the rigid enforcement of the recent regulations from all recruiting from without, each new casualty among the fathers left a larger field with less assistance to the labours of the survivors: whole kingdoms came at length to be confided to the care of a single man; and in pursuance of such widely-extended duties, the missionary had to travel unceasingly from city to city, and from province to province,—his journeys rendered doubly tedious by the necessity of being performed at night, while in the daytime he was forced to conceal himself in hiding-places so cramped and miserable as rather to exhaust than to recruit the strength. Those more especially who were devoted to the task of instructing the exiled Christians underwent almost in-

credible hardships; for they had continually to travel over rugged rocky mountains, through pathless forests and deep valleys, filled in the winter-time with snow, in order to reach the objects of their charitable zeal, who, separated from the rest of the empire by a long chain of nearly inaccessible mountains, dwelt amid the silent snows and treeless deserts of a distant and inclement province, literally the Siberia of Japan; or, still less happy, were distributed as common slaves, to labour in the mines with which that part of the country abounded.

Stricken down by the pressure of such work as this, many a man with apparently years of strength and labour in his yet unexhausted frame became suddenly old before his time, and decrepit and useless on the mission. Sickness and death in some cases supervened; and aided by such casualties as these, the Xoguno had less difficulty than might have been expected in carrying out his favourite scheme for the extirpation of the priesthood. He likewise received considerable assistance from the Dutch, who, unprincipled and treacherous as ever, continued to play their accustomed part, and to sacrifice to their unhallowed love of gain the lives not only of the missionaries themselves, but those of the sailors who brought them over, and of the suffering Christians for whose consolation they had come. A Japanese convert of the name of Joachim had received two missionaries in the guise of merchants on board his junk; but the Dutch, suspecting the real nature of their profession, seized upon the vessel, and delivered her and her crew to the proper authorities at Firando, declaring at the same time their suspicions as to the concealment of a priest among the passengers. This event occurred some short time before the execution of Father Spinola and his companions, and they were brought from their dungeon to be confronted with the suspected religious. The condition to which this venerable company of confessors were by this time reduced excited compassion even in the minds of the men who were conspiring to place others in a similar position.

Father Spinola was already known to the Dutchmen as the scion of one of the noblest families in the German empire. The blood of a long line of heroes flowed in his veins: his father had not only been a favoured friend of the Emperor Rodolph II., but had also held one of the highest offices about his person; and they could not, without some natural touch of pity, see such a man in the position of a common criminal, manacles on his hands, the bones protruding from his discoloured skin, his robe, a soutane, tattered and unwashed, and himself living in a den where they would never have dreamed of even stabling their horses. Such at least is the account which they themselves have left us of their own feelings. Yet faint and fleeting must have been this passing emotion of compassion, since it does not appear to have had any effect on their conduct; for even during the present trial, they were so bent on retaining at all hazards the favour of the Xoguno, that on the recapture of one of the prisoners who had contrived to escape, they actually gave expression to their joy by a discharge of artillery. In the end both the fathers whom they had discovered declared their priesthood; but this confession did not prevent the execution of their companions. The religious were burnt, the crew to a man decapitated at Nangasaki, and Father Spinola and his companions remanded to their dungeon, which they never again left until they were led to execution. Their martyrdom, as already stated, took place on the 10th of September. On the 12th, five more religious were burnt at the stake; on the 15th their catechists followed in the same path; and on the 1st of November Father Paul Peter Navarre, with two other missionaries, encountered a similar fate. He had been recognised some months before by a heathen soldier, who brought him prisoner to Sima-bara; but instead of being consigned to the common gaol, as so many of the religious had been, he was confided to the care of nine Christians, whose lives would have been forfeit in the event of his escape. Every liberty at all consistent with a state of durance

was permitted him; he was allowed to celebrate Mass every day, to communicate freely both with heathens and Christians, and to preach and administer the Sacraments without restriction. The governor, to whose humane interference he was indebted for such favours, was himself very desirous of an interview with the father, and sent him a present of some fruit, accompanied with many civil regrets for his detention, as well as with an intimation that he would willingly have overlooked his presence in the country (as he had already done that of many others of his brethren), had it been possible to do so with any chance of safety to himself. After these preliminaries he sent for Father Paul to his house, where, in the course of a long and interesting conversation, he chanced to touch upon the much vexed question of free will, asking, as the Japanese heathens were constantly in the habit of doing, "Why, if God created all, He should permit any to be lost?" The father answered, that "God indeed had made all men to be happy by means of holiness, but He would not compel them; for then their service would but have been that of slaves, and He would have been deprived of their more honourable homage as free men. He had given them all necessary means for working out their salvation; and even by human institutions they would stand condemned if they abused such gifts. For, sir," he added, more directly addressing the governor, "do not you yourself discriminate between the rebel and the true man; and while you think it just to punish the former, do you not also consider it as only fair to reserve all your rewards and favours for the latter?" The governor acknowledged he was right, requested a copy of the apology which the father had composed on the part of the Christians, and then reluctantly bade him adieu, declaring his belief "that there was neither happiness nor salvation out of the pale of the Catholic Church."

Father Paul hoped much from this interview for the conversion of the governor; but he never deceived himself for a moment as to the ultimate result of his own

imprisonment; and by the path of voluntary suffering, by fasting, hair shirt, and discipline, he endeavoured to fit himself for the steady endurance of any torture which might be his portion in the hour of trial. Before that hour came, however, he had many tedious months to linger as a captive; but at length his sentence was pronounced, and he listened to it with a smiling countenance, observing, that "he was only too happy in being allowed to attest with his blood the truth of that faith which for six-and-thirty years he had been preaching to the Japanese;" adding, "that he had no reason to complain of the Xoguno, and still less of his kind friend and benefactor the Governor of Sima-bara." It is said, that the latter could not refrain from tears when these words were reported to him; but he had no power either to hinder or retard the sentence, and on the 1st of November, after having said his last Mass, weeping all the time for very joy, Father Paul was led to execution barefoot, his hands tied behind him, and accompanied by the destined companions of his martyrdom, namely, two Jesuit fathers, and a boy called Clement, who had hitherto acted as his catechist, and who now walked before him singing the litanies, with a countenance so angelic and serene, that the very heathens marvelled to behold him. They died at the stake with the same constancy which both by word and look they had exhibited from the beginning; and in the following year Father Angelis, a Jesuit also, with fifty Christians, some of whom were clergy, underwent a similar sentence. He might have escaped if he had chosen to do so, for he was absent when they came to seek him at his lodgings; but understanding that the safety of his host was compromised by his non-appearance, he voluntarily surrendered to the officers of the Xoguno,—a measure which unfortunately ensured his own destruction without saving the life of his friend, who was condemned to suffer at the same time with himself.

The sentence was carried into execution at Jedo; the father, with his clerical companions, and Faramon, a

Japanese nobleman, who had already lost all his fingers and toes and been branded in the face for the name of Jesus, being conducted to the stake on horseback, while the other Christians walked; the latter were likewise executed first, either for the purpose of aggravating the sufferings, or of shaking the constancy of the principal victims. If the latter were the object, the attempt failed most signally; for when their hour of trial came, they stood in the midst of the flames with as much composure as if they had been breathing a temperate atmosphere. The execution of Faramon made a deep impression throughout the country, on account both of his exalted station and of his previous sufferings in the cause of religion. Before they bound him to the stake, he made a short address to the spectators, appealing for the truth and earnestness of his convictions to his loss of fortune and of courtly favour, his banishment of fourteen years, and his bodily mutilation. He added that he had not embraced the religion which had cost him so dear, without having both thoroughly sifted its doctrines and convinced himself, by careful examination, of the falsity of those which were taught by the bonzes.

The great majority of the martyrdoms hitherto recorded had been accomplished by fire; but now a different mode of torture was to be pressed into the service. Water was called into requisition; and Father James Caravail, with several lay Christians, was the leader of many heroic confessors who perished from cold. They were left, in the first instance, for three hours in freezing water, during which time one of them died; the rest being carried back to prison and threatened with the martyrdom of fire in case of perseverance, cried out with one voice: "Oh, happy we, to pass through fire and water to the place of our repose!" Instead of the stake, however, the next day they were again placed up to their necks in water; while, the better to tempt them to apostasy, tents, warm baths, and comfortable clothing were made ready on the banks of the pool,

and as near as possible to the spot where their sentence was to be carried into execution. As the day advanced, the water froze more and more; and heavy drifts of snow beating continually upon them, added greatly to their agony. Scarcely able to endure it any longer, one among them sobbed heavily for breath; but Father Paul hearing it, cried out, "Have patience, son; for yet a little while, and these torments will be changed into everlasting repose." At the sound of the father's voice, and his cheering words, the poor victim regained his courage, and soon afterwards happily expired, at the very moment when another, reduced to a similar extremity, exclaimed, "Father, my course is nearly finished." "Depart, then," replied the latter; "depart in peace to God, and die in His holy grace." Thus one by one they perished in this icy grave; and at length the father, who through the live-long day had cheered his fellow-martyrs to the combat, was left to suffer and to die alone. Night had already closed-in heavy and chill around him; and with the exception of his guards and some few faithful Christians, none were there to watch him, for the spectators had all retired to their comfortable homes, and it was not until just midnight that, after fifteen hours of stern endurance, he bowed himself down to the frozen wave, and placidly expired. This martyrdom took place in the year 1624, and shortly afterwards four more religious were burnt at Faco; in June of the same year the provincial of the Jesuits, with eight of the Society, perished in a similar manner; and in the following month Lewis Xanch, a Dominican, was put to death at Omura.

We have mentioned these executions of priests without alluding to the almost weekly massacres which took place among the lay converts, merely to show the virulence and success with which the missionaries were now every where pursued; and when it is remembered that at the commencement of the persecution there were, besides the Jesuits, but a few secular priests and about 30 religious of other orders, in Japan, and that no

reinforcement had succeeded in reaching them from without, words will not be needed to point out the deadly nature of the blow which the Xoguno was at last inflicting on the Church. Having said thus much, however, upon the fate of the religious, it would be a crying injustice to the rest of the Christians to pass over their sufferings altogether in silence.

The Xoguno having once explicitly declared himself opposed to their religion, the inferior monarchs, as a matter of course, vied with each other in their efforts to uproot it. It was only on an express condition to that effect that Bugendono, the new governor of Nangasaki, had been installed in that office; and taunted continually by his rivals for courtly favour with his little success, he employed himself day and night in the invention of more ingenious barbarities to effect his purpose. The object being rather to produce apostasy than death, every species of torture was made as slow as possible in its execution, and was generally eked out with intervals of rest and refreshment—a thousand times more dangerous to the perseverance of the victim than the sharpest continued agony. Some were placed in deep pits, and there nearly buried alive; while executioners appointed for the purpose, slowly, and with blunt weapons, sawed off sometimes the arms and sometimes the head, salt being thrown on the bleeding wound to sharpen its anguish; physicians were also at hand, whose business it was to prolong the life of the sufferer for as many days as possible, by carefully ascertaining the amount of his physical strength, and administering cordials when it was beginning to fail. Others were hung with their head downwards in a pit, where, with the necessary precaution of occasional bleeding, they were made to exist for a considerable time in all the sufferings of an apoplexy; while others again, by means of a funnel forced far down into their throats, were compelled to swallow enormous quantities of water, which was afterwards forced out of the body by violent pressure. Even the Dutch, themselves more than half the

authors of these evils, speak with horror of the deeds which they witnessed at Firando. The nails of the victims were violently wrenched off, holes bored into their legs and arms, great morsels of flesh torn out of their persons by the insertion of hollow reeds which were turned round like a screw, burning brimstone and sulphur forced by long tubes up their noses; and they were, besides, frequently compelled to walk about with executioners holding lighted torches close to their persons. Nor were these cruelties inflicted singly, or upon solitary and more noted delinquents. By tens, by fifties, by hundreds at a time, they were assembled for their trial; one torture rapidly succeeding another, and each new one being so cunningly contrived, that the slightest word of complaint, the most trivial movement of resistance when pain had become almost intolerable, was to be considered as a signal of apostasy, and was greeted by cries of "He is fallen! he is fallen!"—the favourite and most significant words by which the heathen expressed at once the fact of a Christian's recantation, and their own opinion of the weakness through which he had succumbed.

Under circumstances such as these, it is not so wonderful that many failed, as that hundreds and thousands persevered to the end, winning their crown by a long-suffering and patience which, even in the primitive Church, were never surpassed. Men offered themselves willingly to every torture which Eastern ingenuity could devise, or reckless disregard of human life put into execution. Women looked calmly on while their infants perished, and then followed with gladness and joy in the same path to glory. At a city near Omura, a brave Christian plunged his hand into the burning coals, and never withdrew it until commanded to do so by the tyrant who had taunted and dared him to the deed; while at Firando fifty young Christians were made to kneel naked upon living embers, on the express understanding that the most involuntary expression of pain should be considered as apostasy; and having by

their unflinching firmness baffled the closest scrutiny of those who watched them, were sent back to die, half roasted as they were, to their several homes. In one place eighteen infants were put to death in the presence of their parents; at another, a child only seven years old, suspected with the rest of his family of the concealment of a priest, lived for as many days in the midst of the torture they inflicted upon him, without once flinching or failing in his heroic resolution. To each fresh invention of their cruelty he only answered, probably to avoid being betrayed into imprudent disclosures, "Jesus, Mary! Jesus, Mary! How I long to be in heaven with my God!" Nor could other words be extorted from his lips, even when, in their despair of succeeding, they cut open the little creature's shoulders, and poured boiling lead into the wound; and finally, he and his family were burnt alive, without a single one among them having been induced by weakness to give evidence against the priest.

Opposed to constancy such as this, every ordinary mode of torture must have seemed only useless and unmeaning; but at length Bugendono hit upon another, and one so barbarous in its nature, that no tyrant, however cruel or ferocious, who had hitherto ruled in Japan, had ever thought of inflicting it on the most guilty of his subjects.

Between Nangasaki and Sima-bara lies a mountain, bald, bleak, and treeless, whitening beneath the masses of cinders with which it is every where covered, and with a thick and stifling smoke, which can be seen at a distance of several leagues, for ever rising from its summit. The soil that covers its steep ascent is every where soft and spongy, often burning and trembling beneath the footsteps; while so strong is the smell of sulphur which it continually exhales, that it is said no bird can live, or will even attempt to fly within breathing distance of its tainted atmosphere. Deep and unfathomable pools of boiling water lie hidden amid the clefts and fissures which split this gloomy mountain into

peaks and precipices of various sizes; but one, deeper and more unfathomable than all the rest, instead of water, is filled with a mixture of sulphur and other volcanic matter, which seethe and bubble and boil within its dark abyss, emitting all the while so horrible a stench as to have gained it the title of the "Mouth of Hell." One drop alone of this fearful fluid is sufficient to produce an ulcer on the human flesh; and when Bugendono thought on the terrible nature of the chastisement he could thus inflict, and upon the fear and superstition with which the Japanese always regarded the sulphurous waters of Unsen, and the mysterious cavern in which they were produced, he felt that he could not have hit upon a more efficient or infallible means for the intimidation of the Christians, and the extirpation of their creed. At the very time when he came to this resolution, there chanced to be dispersed throughout Arima a band of faithful confessors, upon whom all his previously-invented tortures had been tried in vain; and for this reason the governor considered they would prove the fittest objects for his new experiment. Paul Uciborg was the chief, both for courage and virtue, of this troop of victims; and he had already witnessed the massacre of every member of his family, down even to the youngest of his children, who, in company with fifteen other Christians, had been thrown into the sea, after having first suffered every possible cruelty that could barbarously be inflicted upon them.

"Which shall I begin with?" asked the executioner, as he approached the two youngest of Paul's children for the purpose of chopping off their fingers.

"That is your affair, not mine," the old Christian answered bluntly, probably to conceal a softer feeling. "Cut off which and as many as you please."

"And, oh!" sighed the little Ignatius, as, in the very spirit of the brave man his father, he watched his brother's fingers falling joint by joint beneath the knife of the executioner; "how beautiful your hand looks,

my brother, thus mutilated for the sake of Jesus Christ, and how I long for my own turn to come!"

The child who made this exclamation was but five years old; yet, without shedding a tear, he afterwards endured a similarly protracted amputation, and then silently and unresistingly suffered himself to be cast into the ocean. The father and about twenty of the remaining Christians, who were reserved for a different fate, were, after the massacre of their companions, brought back to shore; although so frightfully crippled, from the mutilations they had already undergone, that one at least of their number was compelled to be carried to his house in a kind of coffin on men's shoulders. The governor had hoped that their ghastly appearance would terrify others from following their example; but he soon found that Jesus Christ was more easily and more eloquently preached by such wounds and such deeds as theirs, than by any words that could be uttered; and in his vexation at the numbers who flocked to them for edification and encouragement, he condemned them, as we have seen, to the boiling sulphurs of Unsen.

As the little company of martyrs approached its terrible chasm, one among them, at the bidding of the executioner, and in the spirit of an Appolonia, rushed forward at once, and flung himself into its depths; but Paul, with a more measured courage, commanded the others to restrain their zeal; while to the heathens who taunted him with cowardice, he contented himself by saying, "that they were not masters of their own lives, which God having given, God alone had a right to take away; and that in reality there was more real courage in calmly waiting the approach of death, than in rushing into its arms in such a way as to put an end to all its terrors in a moment." Silenced by this answer, so calm and noble in its genuine Christian courage, the executioners proceeded to their duties; and having tied each of the martyrs by ropes, in order to prevent their falling entirely into the chasm, one by one they

lowered them into its seething contents. Some were destroyed at a single plunge; others, by being quickly withdrawn, were reserved for the torment of a second immersion; but old Paul, who suffered last, and who had excited the hatred of the heathens by the courage with which it was believed he had inspired his companions, they managed, with dexterous cruelty, to let down three several times into the abyss before life was altogether extinguished; and each time as he rose to the surface he was heard to exclaim: "Eternal praise be to the ever adorable Sacrament of the Altar!"

After this first trial of its power, the scalding sulphurs of Unsen became a favourite mode of torture for the Christians. Men, women, children, and infants were sent hither in crowds. Some expired after a single plunge; others after two or three successive immersions; others, again, and the greater number, were with a more elaborate cruelty sprinkled with the boiling liquor day after day, often for a period of thirty days together, until their bodies were one mass of sores and vermin, and they died from the effects of this universal ulceration.

"Alas! what more can they do against you?" asked a compassionate heathen, as he removed the mantle which had been cast over one of these victims, and discovered the mass of rottenness and corruption which lay hidden beneath.

"You can cut open my back," answered the stern old Christian, "and pour the boiling sulphur into the wound; hundreds of other torments there are also which you may inflict upon me, and which I can bear with gladness for my God."

Unhappily, excepting for their own salvation, all this suffering and courage was of no avail. As fast as one tyrant disappeared from the scene, another more cruel and ferocious still stepped into his place. The Xoguno died; and he was succeeded by his son, who took the title of the To-Xoguno, as an intimation that he considered himself greater than his father,—an assump-

tion which he probably justified both to himself and to his subjects by the increased barbarity with which he pursued the Christians, who fell in greater numbers during his reign than during any which had preceded it.

Bugendono likewise perished by a painful and unnatural death; but untaught by the terrible nature of the chastisement which had fallen upon his predecessor, Unemondo, the new governor of Nangasaki, appeared to have no dearer wish than to surpass, or, if that were not possible, to equal him in ferocity. The end of that great persecutor of the Christians is indeed too remarkable to be passed over in silence; and it hardly seems rash to consider it as a judgment of Divine Providence, that the immediate instrument of his own death should have been the very torture which he had himself invented for the Christians. The sulphurous waters of Unsen were, when reduced to a moderate degree of heat, occasionally used for medicinal purposes; and hither, therefore, Bugendono caused himself to be carried for the cure of a disease by which he was tormented; but unable in the frenzy of his fever to calculate the proper temperature at which they should be used, he compelled his attendants to put him in immediately after they had been brought fresh from the chasm, and his body was in an instant so completely par-boiled, that the flesh literally fell from the bones before he could be taken out. His death, striking as was the coincidence by which it had been accompanied, appears to have made no impression upon those who were fast following in his footsteps. With fire and sword the To-Xoguno so inexorably pursued his path, that in the third year of his reign (1633), from July to October alone, no fewer than sixteen priests, besides several religious, principally Jesuits, fell into the hands of the governor of Nangasaki. Among the victims of this four-months' slaughter, we find the names of Father Iscida, a Japanese Jesuit, and of Father Julian Nicaura, the last survivor of the ambassa-

dors to Rome; some of his companions having preceded him by martyrdom, while others had died, it is supposed, by a natural death. The history of this noble Japanese reads almost like an epitome of that of the Church which he had so zealously served. He had seen it almost in its dawn under the care and teaching of the first successors of St. Francis; he had endeavoured to promote its best interests by his embassy to Rome; he had afterwards devoted himself to its service in the Society of Jesus; and now, after forty-three years of unmitigated toil, of prayer and preaching, of wandering from province to province and from kingdom to kingdom, sometimes in his unceasing search for souls, at others in his efforts to elude his pursuers; worn to a very shadow, broken down and crushed as much by his bitter sorrows as by his life-long labours for his persecuted brethren,—he sealed at last his religious profession in his blood, dying by the trial of the pit, after four nights and days of heroic endurance of its torture. Sebastian Vieyra was another of the more remarkable victims of this blood-stained year. He had been sent to Rome about ten years before for the purpose of representing the disastrous state of the Japanese Church to the Pope; but when at length he knelt at the feet of Urban VIII., he was so moved at the recollection of the deplorable tale which he had to tell, that he burst into tears, and for a considerable time was unable to speak. The Holy Father received him with much tenderness and concern, animated him by his conversations to constancy and courage, and finally dismissed him with letters of condolence to his suffering brethren, as well as with a promise of exerting the Papal power to the utmost to procure a supply of missionaries for their expiring Church. This last, however, proved unfortunately a nearly impossible undertaking. It was easy enough to find priests willing to go; but the question as to how they were to be introduced into the kingdom was one not admitting of so ready a solution. Nor was it until

the year 1632 that Vieyra himself, with all the advantages that his previous knowledge of the language and customs could give him, succeeded in landing, disguised as a common sailor, on the most desolate part of the coast. Twelve months afterwards, he and four other Jesuits were arrested at Osako, and brought prisoners to Jedo. The To-Xoguno did not see him himself, because the admission of a condemned prisoner into the imperial presence was always considered tantamount to granting him pardon; but as he felt extremely curious about his journey to Europe, he sent confidential persons day after day to question him on the subject. Vieyra's answers stimulated his curiosity, and probably caused him to feel an anxiety to preserve his life; for every possible means were attempted to procure his apostasy; and one day especially we are told that they brought him into a room filled with all kinds of instruments of torture, bidding him choose between them and the religion which the emperor wished him to embrace. His hands were unbound, and ink and paper given him that he might write his answer, which he did in a few spirited words, to the effect, that although he would always submit to the temporal authority of the To-Xoguno, he could not accept his spiritual supremacy; and that threats were useless to frighten, or promises to allure him to any other line of conduct; since neither the one nor the other could have any effect on the soul, which was, as it ought to be, the chief, or rather the only object of his solicitude. A little later he wrote down a short formula of the Christian religion which the emperor had requested him to make, and which, after the latter had perused with great attention, he could not forbear exclaiming: "This European is a man of wonderful mind; but if what he says of the Immortality of the soul be true, what will become of *us* hereafter?"

So deep, in fact, was the impression made upon his mind by this paper, that the enemies of Christianity put every engine into play in order to accomplish the

death of a man who seemed but too likely to lead their imperial master into a path diametrically opposed to their private interests and inclinations. With some difficulty they succeeded; and in conformity to his sentence Vieyra was hung for four days with his head downwards in the pit: but the executioners, at the end of that time, finding him still strong and full of life, placed him over a large fire, which speedily reduced him to ashes.

His execution took place in 1634; and when, in the following year, the Portuguese anchored as usual off Nangasaki, they found a kind of wooden island, with two rows of houses on it, floating before the town, and connected with it by means of a bridge. It was called the "Island of Desima," and had been constructed during their absence at the instigation of the Dutch, for the express purpose of preventing the possibility of their setting foot upon the land. Here they were to reside during their stay in Japan, and to transact the exchange of their merchandise; while the same edict which sentenced them to this ignominious treatment, likewise prohibited their displaying any crucifix or religious image by which Christianity might be recalled to the minds of the people. The utter banishment included in this sentence put a final blow to the hopes of the Christians, by depriving them of every chance of future pastors; and thus, exposed at once to all the tortures that the murderous policy of their enemies could devise, and deprived at the same time of the support and consolation which only religion had power to bestow, it is not wonderful that at last they yielded to despair, and openly revolted against their rulers. With the assistance of Dutch artillery, this ill-digested movement was speedily put down; and the result proved as fatal to the Portuguese as to the native Christians themselves; for the former having been unjustly accused by their rivals of having privately instigated the people to rebellion, they were banished in a fit of imperial indignation, not only out of Japan, but even out of the Isle

of Desima, in which they had hitherto been permitted to reside.

No subsequent representations or entreaties, either of the Portuguese merchants or of their Viceroy in the Indies, could induce the To-Xoguno to rescind this resolution; from that hour every attempt at negotiation was steadily resisted; and so strictly did he adhere to the very letter of his edict, that when a solemn embassy was sent by the government of Portugal to treat with him on the subject, the universal law of nations was disregarded, and both the ambassadors themselves, and the crew of the vessel which had brought them over, were condemned without mercy and executed on the spot. Fourteen only of the latter were reserved to tell the tale of the martyrdom of their companions; for martyrs they were, since they were offered their lives on condition of apostasy; and when the little party of the survivors were sent back to India, they were put in charge of a chest into which the Japanese had collected all the bones of their slaughtered compatriots, while upon the lid they had printed an inscription to the effect, "That so long as the sun shone upon the earth, no Christian should be permitted to land in Japan; and that if King Philip (of Spain) himself, or the very God of the Christians, or even their own Great Xaca. the chiefest and highest of their especial idols, were to disobey this order, they should be made to pay for their presumption with their heads."

Unfortunately, neither the banishment of the Portuguese nor the murder of their ambassadors was sufficient to allay the jealous suspicions of the emperor; and it was probably somewhere about this time that the ceremony of the Jesumi was instituted. The name is, apparently, a corruption of "Jesus and Mary," the invariable rallying cry of the Japanese converts; and the ceremony itself consisted simply in trampling under foot a crucifix, or image of the Madonna, which was carried from house to house by officers appointed for the purpose. Such an act was considered equiva-

lent to a formal recantation; for the heathens concluded—and who shall marvel at their conclusion?—that they who were willing to dishonour the effigy, could have no real feeling of honour for the original, and therefore that they could not be Christians, that is to say, they could not be believers in the Divinity of Christ, if they found in this faith no motive for reverence to His image or to the image of His Mother. Death was to be the portion of those who should refuse thus to trample on the likeness of their Saviour; and death was accordingly inflicted upon vast multitudes of Christians who remained true to their creed. The time had, in fact, arrived, when the light of faith, so rapidly enkindled by the prayers and preachings of St. Francis, was to be as rapidly extinguished in the blood and tears of his spiritual children; and sad and distressing to all the better feelings of the heart as are the scenes through which we have been compelled to wade in pursuing the downward course of the Church he founded, still is there one high thought, one dominant fact presiding over all to encourage and console. That thought is of the grace of God, and that fact the wonderful power which the grace of God so exercises over human nature, as out of its weakness to bring forth strength, and out of its bitterest passions sweetness, and out of the same materials that went to the formation of a Nero or a Teigo-Sama creates an Agnes or a Francis Xavier. For never, perhaps, in the long history of the world, had the miraculous workings of Divine grace been more triumphantly vindicated, than in this outbreak of the Gospel through the heathen realm of Japan. Beneath its sweet and saving influence men born to a tradition of lies, and nurtured in the indulgence of the worst passions of their nature,—proud, effeminate, luxurious, and revengeful,—suddenly became chaste, humble, mortified, and forgiving. The rich, who had been intolerant of poverty, as if it had been the badge and banner of a felon's fate, now grew to be loving and

reverent to the poor, as the representatives of Jesus upon earth. Haughty nobles, who had looked upon suicide as but a dignified escape from the hands of the executioner, now patiently awaited their death, as it pleased their tormentors to dole it out to them by inches; and courtly philosophers, who had hitherto ignored eternity, because they dared not look on the retribution which it threatened to their crimes, were now ready and willing to suffer every torture that could be inflicted upon them for the sake of the sure hope of heaven that was laid up in their hearts. Nor was it men alone who thus proved themselves brave in the hour of trial: women were every where found to equal, sometimes even to surpass them in stoical endurance; and little children became as strong men in the heroic resolution with which they accepted sufferings at the hands of their ruthless persecutors.

Many, indeed, among the people fell off, as might have been expected; but God was glorified in thousands, who at the stake or upon the cross, beneath the sword of the headsman or in the sulphurous waters of Unsen, proved themselves worthy disciples of a crucified Saviour; while among the clergy, whether native or foreign, only two or three failed in the hour of trial. The rest, as they were taken, laid down their lives, one by one in succession; concealing themselves, as they were in duty bound, as long as they could, for the sake of their flocks, but going calmly and gladly to the scaffold the instant that Providence seemed plainly to lead them to its foot.

To say nothing of the secular clergy, and of the religious of different orders, who fell nearly every man at his post, it is calculated that no fewer than four hundred members of the Society of Jesus perished in the course of those thirty years of persecution in Japan; and of this vast number of victims one, and one alone, proved unfaithful to his trust; while even his place was instantaneously filled by another, who, burning with

zeal for the glory of God, and suffering mortal anguish for the shame and scandal which such an apostasy had brought on the Church, the priesthood, and the Society of which he was a member, actually came from the far west for the express purpose of taking the post which the renegade had abandoned, and of blotting out the stain of the perjury in his own blood. Mastrilli was the name of this heroic religious, and his wish was speedily fulfilled; for he and his companion, a man as brave and self-devoted as himself, perished by the sword, after having been tempted in vain to apostasy by the trial of the pit. Possibly their prayers it was, and the merit of their martyrdom, which finally won for their apostate brother the gift of his conversion; and which moved him, after many years of struggle with himself, to deliver himself up to the authorities of Nangasaki, with the declaration that he was a Christian, and ready and willing to sign and seal that declaration with his blood. He was instantly committed to the trial of the pit, and perished at the age of ninety, after four days' patient endurance of the self-same torture which, in his younger and more vigorous years, he had been unable to support for about the same number of hours. Full nineteen years elapsed between the failure of his first trial and the triumphant conclusion of his last; and during that space of time each succeeding attempt of European missionaries on Japan is but the history of a martyrdom and a grave.

In 1643, Father Rubino, a Jesuit, with four companions, succeeded in landing at Satzuma; but they had not been two days in the country before they were arrested—made to suffer, first the torment of water (as it has been already described) every day for several months, then that of fire, which, by means of lighted torches, was applied all over their persons, the wounds being systematically healed for the purpose of renewing the application; and at the close of nearly a year of unceasing suffering and unwearied patience, they were condemned, as a last resource, to the trial of the pit.

So vivid was the joy with which they all listened to this sentence, that, fancying its purport had been misunderstood, the governor caused it to be read over again; but they, perceiving his mistake, assured him they were already well aware of its contents, and that the gladness he had seen on their faces was but the natural expression of the feeling with which they contemplated their approaching union with their God. They all remained firm to the end: one of them living for no less than nine days in the nearly unendurable torture to which they had been condemned; and their death was soon followed by that of Father Marquez, another Jesuit, with four companions, also of the Society, who were arrested almost as soon as they had set foot upon the shore. They were brought by their captors to Jedo, where they were confronted with some of the Dutch dealers, who had been sent for from Nangasaki to identify them as priests, and to whom we are indebted for our account of their trial and martyrdom. "The Jesuits," says Haren, "were seated on miserable mats; their faces pale and emaciated, eyes dim and sunk deeply in their heads, hands blackened and purpled, and bodies all bruised by the horrible tortures to which they had been already subjected. They answered with great courage and frankness to the questions proposed by their judges, and their limbs being sawn off, one by one, by order of the To-Xoguno, such of them as did not sink at once under the torture were carried back to prison, where they speedily expired."

The martyrdom of John Baptist Sidotti is the last which we find on record in the annals of Japan. He seems to have been attracted to this perilous mission from his earliest youth; and after employing himself for many years in the study of the Japanese language, he obtained a mission from the Pope to go and preach in that kingdom. Two more years were spent at Manilla in order to perfect his knowledge of the language; and his design becoming public, every facility was afforded him for carrying it into execution,—a ship being even

fitted out for his use by the governor of the Philippines. He was already within landing-distance of Japan, when a fishing-boat hove in sight, and a native idolater, who had accompanied them on their voyage, was sent to try and bribe its crew into silence. He does not appear to have been successful, for when he returned to the ship he did all he could to dissuade Sidotti from his enterprise; but after long and earnest prayer, the latter told the captain that this was the moment for which he had so ardently sighed; and that being in sight of Japan, nothing should prevent him from attempting to land,—since he did not rely for success upon his own strength, but rather upon the grace and goodness of God, and upon the prayers of those who had already shed their blood on its soil.

Finding it impossible to dissuade him, the captain proceeded to make arrangements for landing him at night; and in the mean time Sidotti employed himself in writing letters and in making a short exhortation to the crew, in the course of which he asked their pardon for any scandal he might have given, and for any deficiency in the religious instruction they had received at his hands. It could have been but humility alone which had prompted this request; for his life on board, as well as every where else, had been most saintly, and the chief portion of his time had been employed both earnestly and efficaciously in leading the crew to virtue. His last act on board was to kiss, in unfeigned lowliness of spirit, the feet of all; and towards midnight he and the captain descended into the boat which was to convey them to land. During their short transit Sidotti was deeply absorbed in prayer; but as they touched the shore, he threw himself on his knees and devoutly kissed the ground, thanking God for having brought him at length to this land, the object of all his wishes and his prayers. The captain accompanied him a little way in shore; and when it was necessary to separate, he forced a few pieces of gold upon his acceptance, in hopes of its enabling him to propitiate the Japanese, and then affectionately took his leave.

He had not done so a minute too soon for his own safety; for his boat had scarcely reached the ship before Sidotti was a prisoner and on his way to Nangasaki. There, like his predecessors, he was confronted with the Dutch, who describe him as a tall pale man, with black hair, and about forty years of age. He wore a Japanese robe, and a chain, from whence a crucifix depended, was hanging from his neck; his Rosary was in his hands, which were manacled at the wrist, and he carried a couple of books under his arm. As he understood Japanese, there was no need of an interpreter; and his answers were perfectly frank and open as to the nature of his intentions in coming to Japan. After many questions upon this subject, they asked him if he were aware of the laws against the landing of the Spaniards and Portuguese, to which he also replied in the affirmative; but added, that they did not apply to him, as he was an Italian. At this juncture of the conversation, observing some of the spectators busy with the bag which contained the vessels for the celebration of Mass, he interrupted himself to beg that no irreverence might be offered to them—a request that was instantly, and in a very decorous manner, complied with. He was afterwards sent to Jedo, where he lingered in captivity for a considerable number of years; but as he contrived to convert nearly every one who approached him, he was at last immured in a cavity from four to five feet in depth, his food being supplied him through an opening at the top; and after lingering on for some time in inconceivable agony, he expired at last from the effects of this protracted torture.

From the hour of his death, till 1860, no Christian missionary was tolerated in the kingdom of Japan. The Dutch alone had permission to approach its shores; but, by a singular retribution, they were themselves banished to that Isle of Desima which their intrigues had caused to be erected for their rivals; and their trade, which, even in the face of Portuguese competi-

tion, had enabled them to send seven or eight ships to the Japanese market, gradually dwindled into such total insignificance, that in Bell's *System of Geography* we find it stated in 1855 that two at the outside suffice for its demands. Commerce was, and continued to be, their only object; and in pursuance of its sordid gains they have been content to leave Japan to its idol-worship, without thought or effort to win it to the knowledge of the living God. This was their compact with its imperial ruler; and this compact they both then and afterwards rigidly observed. Not only did they leave the heathen to be heathen still; but in the very hottest of the persecution they either aided (as we have already seen) the emperor in his murderous designs against the Christians, or sat still in supreme indifference, suffering him without remonstrance to root out the Christian religion by the extermination of his people,—banishing, burning, drowning, and beheading, and carrying his jealous hatred into the very realms of death itself, by digging up the bones of the martyred dead, and scattering them abroad on the waters of the ocean.

With all his efforts, however, and those of his successors, it is very doubtful whether Christianity was at any time entirely extinct in Japan. It had spread too widely, and been too deeply rooted in the hearts of the people, to be entirely forgotten in the course of a few generations; and accordingly, even so late as the eighteenth century, a Jesuit missionary in China tells us of certain holy pictures, painted upon porcelain, which the Chinese had been then recently in the habit of manufacturing for the markets of Japan. And an author in the mid-nineteenth century assures us that the Japanese possess a knowledge of the ten commandments which, whatever may be their own theory on the subject, they evidently must have derived from the Christian tradition; while the Chinese, whose opinion —as their nearest neighbours, and the most closely associated with them both by commerce and by cus-

toms—is worthy at least of considerable attention, were, before the reopening of the door, impressed with the idea that Christianity, instead of being defunct, was merely dormant among the people. Nor ever since the hour of proscription was the Catholic Church unmindful of this once fair and flourishing portion of her heavenly inheritance; but from the east and from the west, from China and from India, and from the distant shores of France—always the great depôt of missionary workmen—zealous and devoted men were ever on the watch for a favourable moment to follow in the footsteps of St. Francis Xavier, and to raise again the cry of salvation by which he once gathered its multitudes around the banner of the cross.

CHAPTER X.

The Second Spring.*

FATHER SIDOTTI was the last Jesuit who has ever trodden the Japanese soil. After his death darkness, black as night, spread over the scene, for it must be remembered that not only was Christianity (apparently) exterminated, but all intercourse with foreigners, even for trade, was abruptly broken off, the only partial exception being in favour of the Chinese and Dutch. But though Catholicity in Japan was to all intents and purposes extinct, the blood of so many martyrs was not destined to be shed in vain. During the death-silence of well-nigh two centuries, the Holy See did not altogether forget this once so hopeful field of spiritual harvest. Almost contemporaneously with the final struggles of the Church in Japan, an entirely new movement was taking shape in Europe, leading eventually, under the marvellous guidance of Providence, to the erection of the Seminary of the Foreign Missions in Paris, and the formation of the greatest foreign missionary agency which the Church has ever seen, the illustrious Société des Missions Étrangères.

The earliest countries of the Far East evangelised by the members of this Society were Annam (Cochin China), Tonkin, Siam, and parts of China. Yet even at that early date the eyes of the Society seem to have been turned towards the Forbidden Land of Japan.

To Gregory XVI. was reserved the glory of re-opening the sealed book of the history of the Japanese Church. In 1832 he erected the Vicariate Apostolic of Korea, attaching to it the Liu-Kiu (Ryu-Kyu, or Loo-Choo) Islands, dependencies of Japan, in

* For a fuller version of this portion of the history of the Japanese Mission, see *The Catholic Church in Japan* (C.T.S.).

the hope that they might become a gate opening into the Island Kingdom, as indeed they proved to be.

A new factor was about this time introduced into the Japanese problem. The various governments of Europe and the United States were making more and more energetic efforts to bring about an opening-up of Japan for commercial purposes. The French authorities were willing to associate their efforts with those of the great French missionary society to gain a footing in the Land of Promise.

In 1846 Pope Gregory XVI., to show his interest in the work, nominated M. Forcade, Bishop of Samos and Vicar Apostolic of Japan. The same year Admiral Cécile called at Nafa, in the Liu-Kiu Islands, with his squadron, and endeavoured to negotiate a treaty. The missioners were now allowed to remain in the Tu-mai lamassery and to procure books for the study of the language, and were relieved from the vexatious surveillance they had hitherto endured.

A gap of eight years now occurs in the progress of our history. In 1854, under the pontificate of Pius IX., M. Libois, the new Superior, sent out three new missioners to the Liu-Kiu Islands, under M. Girard; but their position was a very painful one, and, like their predecessors, they were subjected to incessant and vexatious surveillance.

The real opening-up of Japan is to be credited to the United States, for it was Commodore Perry who in 1853 conducted the first successful negotiation with the Shogun's Government, not without a very considerable and perhaps necessary display of force, and the American treaty was ratified in 1854. Treaties followed with Great Britain in the same year, Russia in 1855, and Holland in 1856, each providing for the admission of traders to two Japanese ports. France was still knocking at the door.

At last, in 1858, Japan was finally opened to the French, and as a consequence to the missioners of the French society. The ports of Yokohama, Nagasaki,

and Hakodate were opened by the diplomatic key. Religious liberty was allowed to foreigners, not yet to natives. On 28th November, M. Girard, now Pro-Vicar Apostolic of Japan, writes in exulting strains to the Central Council of the Society of the Propagation of the Faith:—

"After ten years of waiting and painful uncertainty about the future of a mission always so dear to us, to behold the gates at length opened is an event in which we cannot fail to see the direct intervention of Almighty God. The treaty awards to the Minister Plenipotentiary the right of travelling all over the empire. We hope that one of us may be able to accompany him and seek out the remnants of the ancient Christian settlements said still to exist in Japan." *

Very little, however, could be done at first. Prudence made caution absolutely necessary. Missionaries were placed in each of the three treaty ports to attend to the spiritual wants of European Catholics, and chapels were erected at Yokohama and Nagasaki. That of the former town was dedicated with considerable pomp on January 12th, 1861, and many Japanese, undeterred by severe Government edicts, daily visited it out of curiosity.

We must now turn our eyes for a moment to Rome. Already, as early as 1627, Pope Urban VIII. had permitted the Franciscans and Jesuits to celebrate yearly an Office and Mass in honour of the martyrs of their respective congregations who, as above narrated, had been crucified at Nagasaki under Taiko-Sama in 1597. Their cause pursued its course in Rome, and finally, on Whit Sunday, 1862, Pius IX., surrounded by an extraordinary gathering of Catholic bishops from all parts of the world, had the consolation of solemnly proclaiming the canonisation of these twenty-six first Martyrs of Japan.

What followed in Japan seemed like a visible answer

* Ad. Launay, p. 365.

to the honours thus so splendidly rendered to these heroes of the Faith. On February 19th, 1865, the fine Catholic church dedicated to the twenty-six Martyrs was opened at Nagasaki, the scene of their martyrdom. This church had been built by M. Bernard Petitjean, a native of the diocese of Autun, who, having joined the Société des Missions Étrangères, had been sent out to Japan in 1860. We must let this illustrious missionary, whose name will be for ever indissolubly bound up with the history of the Japanese Church, narrate the wondrous sequel in his own oft-quoted words :—

"Scarce a month had elapsed since the benediction of the church at Nagasaki. On March 17th, 1865, about half-past twelve, some fifteen persons were standing at the church door. Urged no doubt by my Angel Guardian, I went up and opened the door. I had scarce time to say a *Pater* when three women between fifty and sixty years of age knelt down beside me, and said in a low voice, placing their hand upon their heart :

"'The hearts of all of us here do not differ from yours.'

"'Indeed!' I exclaimed. 'Whence do you come?'

"They mentioned their village, adding: 'At home everybody is the same as we are.'

"Blessed be Thou, O my God! for all the happiness which filled my soul. What a compensation for five years of barren ministry! Scarce had our dear Japanese opened their hearts to us than they displayed an amount of trustfulness which contrasts strangely with the behaviour of their pagan brethren. I was obliged to answer all their questions, and to talk to them of *O Deous Sama*, *O Yaso Sama*, and *Santa Maria Sama*, by which names they designate God, Jesus Christ, and the Blessed Virgin. The view of the statue of the Madonna and Child recalled Christmas to them, which they said they had celebrated in the

eleventh month.* They asked me if we were not at the seventeenth day of the Time of Sadness (*i.e.* Lent); nor was St. Joseph unknown to them; they call him *O Yaso Samana yo fu*, 'the adoptive father of our Lord.' In the midst of this volley of questions footsteps were heard; immediately all dispersed. But as soon as the newcomers were recognised all returned, laughing at their fright. 'They are people of our village,' they said. 'They have the same hearts as we have.'"

Next day an entire Christian village invited a visit from the missioners. Two days later 600 more Christians sent a deputation to Nagasaki. By June 8th the missioners had learnt the existence of twenty-five "Christianities," and seven "baptizers" were put into direct communication with them.

Thus (to quote M. Launay's admirable *résumé* of this marvellous episode), in spite of the absence of all exterior help, without any sacraments—except baptism—by the action of God in the first place, and in the next by the faithful transmission in families of the teaching and example of the Japanese Christians and martyrs of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the sacred fire of the True Faith, or at least a still burning spark of this fire, had remained concealed in a country tyrannised over by a government the most despotic and the most hostile to the Christian religion. All that was required was to blow upon this spark and to rekindle its flame in order to realise once more the wish expressed by our Saviour, "I am come to cast fire upon earth, and what do I desire but that it be enkindled?"

Such was the almost miraculous event of March 17th, 1865, in honour of which Pius IX. established a feast, with the rank of a greater double, to be cele-

* According to the old Japanese calendar, the year began with our February.

brated for ever in Japan under the title of "The Finding of the Christians." It was a graceful recognition of the part played by Father Petitjean in this resurrection of the Japanese Church that further prompted Pius IX. to nominate him the following year (1866) Bishop of Myrophitus and Vicar Apostolic of Japan. One of the first acts of the new bishop was to erect a statue to "Our Lady of Japan" in 1867, and the same year Pius IX. pronounced the beatification of 205 more of the early Japanese martyrs, including both men and women.

We cannot be astonished that, in spite of all precautions, the secret soon leaked out in Japan. Christianity was still a proscribed religion, forbidden under pain of death. No wonder the year 1867 saw the commencement of new attempts at persecution. In 1868 a fresh edict was issued and displayed on the public notice-boards, declaring, "The evil sect called Christian is strictly prohibited. Suspicious persons should be reported to the proper officers, and rewards will be given." One of the missioners, M. Laucaigne (afterwards Vicar Apostolic), had a narrow escape of being arrested. Sixty-five Christians of Urakami were actually seized.

This same year (1868) saw the great national revolution, which entirely altered the system of government. Here is not the place to narrate this, the most important political event which had occurred for seven centuries in Japan. Suffice it to say that the upshot of the struggle was the abolition of the Shogunate, established by Yoritomo as far back as 1192, and the resumption of supreme and undivided power by the real Emperor, the Mikado, whose supremacy had been practically dormant during all those long centuries. It was the still reigning Mikado, Mutsuhito, then only sixteen years of age, under whom this great revolution was effected. Strange to say, this restoration of the imperial power was coincident with a recrudescence of persecution. Fresh imperial edicts against Christians

were published. Between October 1869 and January 1870, 4500 Christians were deported from Urakami and the Goto Islands, the chief centres of Catholicity. Pius IX. addressed to these confessors a letter of encouragement. In reply to remonstrances from the Powers, the Government of Tokyo in a memorandum accused the missioners of fomenting disorder. And it was a considerable time before the Consuls could induce the Government to recall the exiles, and withdraw the measures decreed against the Christians.

The next few years are designated in the annual reports of the missioners as a time of mingled persecution and liberty. For in spite of the expiring efforts of hostility and repression, the growth of Catholicity and the expansion of Catholic works went on very rapidly. It was not till 1873 that all religious persecution ceased. It is calculated that between 1868 and 1873 from 6000 to 8000 Christians were torn from their families, deported, and subjected to cruel tortures, so that nearly 2000 died in prison.* On March 14th, 1873, all the Christian prisoners were set at liberty, though the missioners were not yet allowed to penetrate into the interior.

From this time forward the history of Catholicity in Japan has been one of most gratifying progress. The number of missionary priests sent out by the society largely increased, rising from 3 in 1860 to 28 in 1880, and to 98 in 1895. Nuns were introduced belonging to the two Societies of St. Paul of Chartres and of the Child Jesus. The first religious women entered Japan in 1872, and soon had several native postulants. The first native nun (at least in modern times), and also the first to die, was Agatha Kataoka Fūkū, in religion Sister Margaret, the sister and daughter of martyrs, who herself died quite young from the effects of the ill-usage she had endured as a child in gaol, where she saw her father perish under the blows of the executioner. There are now a good number of native nuns,

* Louvet, p. 238.

both professed and postulants. A native clergy too has been created, the first Japanese priest having been ordained in September 1883, and 32 native priests are already at work. "If," says Louvet, "in the hour of trial this heroic Church, which was able with mere catechists to preserve the Faith, had had a native clergy, it is probable that Japan would at the present day be well-nigh Christian." *

The ecclesiastical government of Japan has necessarily developed to keep pace with this religious growth. In 1876 (June 3rd) Pope Pius IX. divided the vicariate of Japan into two, a North and a South vicariate. His successor, Leo XIII., in 1888 (March 16th), created a third vicariate, Central Japan, out of that of South Japan; and in 1891 (April 17th) divided that of North Japan, erecting the new vicariate of Hakodate. The preceding year, on the twenty-fifth anniversary of the "Discovery of the Christians," the First Provincial Synod of Japan was held at Nagasaki, close to the tomb of Bishop Petitjean (who had died October 7th, 1884), and in the very church where the wonderful event of March 17th, 1865, had taken place.

Who could then have told Father Petitjean (wrote his successor, Mgr. Jules Cousin) that twenty-five years later there would be assembled at the foot of the same altar four bishops, with over thirty missioners and native priests, and that his first meeting with a few poor women, who were praying to *Santa Maria*, would have had such rapid and consoling results?

At this synod was first announced the great and crowning act long contemplated by Leo XIII.—the formal creation of the Japanese hierarchy. This was effected by the Apostolic Letter *Non maius Nobis*, dated June 15th, 1891. In this interesting document the Holy Father, after a brief but succinct summary of the history of Catholicity in Japan from the time of

* Louvet, p. 239.

St. Francis Xavier down to our own day, refers in graceful terms to the "courtesy of justice" of the present Japanese Government towards Catholic missioners, and especially to the interchange of amenities between the Holy See and the Mikado. The latter had solemnly received Mgr. Osouf in 1885 with an autograph letter from Leo XIII., expressing the Pontiff's gratitude at the benevolent disposition of the Japanese Government; and in his turn had deputed a diplomatist to Rome to offer his imperial congratulations on the Pope's sacerdotal jubilee.*

The Pontiff then proceeds to create and delimit the four sees. The Metropolitan See is fixed at Tokyo, "the illustrious city, which is the capital of the Empire and the residence of the most serene Emperor."

The suffragan sees are those of Hakodate and Nagasaki, in South Japan. All the rest forms the diocese of Osaka.

With the creation of the hierarchy, the Church of Japan entered upon an entirely new era of her history.

The following table † gives a summary view of the growth of the Japanese Church in this century:—

Year.	Superiors.	Missioners.	Native Clergy.	Churches and Chapels.	Schools.	Number of Catholics.
1860	1 Prefect Apostolic	2	0	0	0	none known
1870	1 Vicar Apostolic	13	0	4	0	10,000
1880	2 ,, ,,	28	0	80	60	23,989
1891	1 Archbishop 3 Bishops	82	15	164	64	44,505
1902	1 Archbishop 4 Bishops	118	32	164	90	68,336

And the future? The establishment of the Japanese hierarchy may be very correctly regarded as the

* Two other indications of the changed dispositions of the Mikado's Government deserve to be quoted here. In 1877 when a fresh persecution threatened in Korea, and Mgr. Ridel, V.A., was arrested, the Japanese Government intervened in his favour! On 11th August, 1884, an imperial decree disestablished Buddhism and Shintoism, the State religions, and declared the bonzes to be no longer State officials.

† From Louvet, ch. xiii.

close of one epoch, and the opening of another. What are the prospects of the Catholic Church in the Japan of the twentieth century?

The reports of our missionaries have undoubtedly their consoling side. The number of Catholics in 1902 was 68,336. Works of education and charity show a gratifying increase. Special mention may be made of the two excellent leper asylums of Gotemba and Kumamoto. Leprosy is still a terrible scourge of the Japanese Archipelago, and very heartrending are the accounts published from time to time by our Catholic missioners. The work among the lepers will doubtless bring with it many spiritual blessings on our missionary work, and must produce a great effect on the native mind. It is consoling again to read of the primitive fervour which still characterises the Christians of the Goto Islands, "the heritage of the ancient Church of Japan"; of the living zeal and self-denying labours of the Catechists of Oshima; and of the great hopes entertained of the future conversion of the Ainus, whom Father Rousseau finds "docile, sympathetic, and humble," their chief defects being excessive timidity, and—alas!—the love of intoxicating drink.

But it is useless to deny that there are many dark clouds looming over the future of Japanese Catholicity. The era of actual persecution is over, but it may well be doubted whether the dangers that seem to threaten are not more formidable than the sword and fire of the persecutor. The bishops' reports are full of these perils. The Archbishop of Tokyo enumerates four agencies at work which impede the advance of Catholicity; these are—the active hostility of the bonzes, the antagonism of the Protestant sects, political agitation, and the growing dislike of foreigners, and chiefly the anti-Catholic press.

It cannot be doubted that the spectacle of the disintegration of the Christian name and the contradictory nature of the respective teachings of various sects must produce the worst possible effect upon the keen

and intelligent mind of the Japanese, and must afford a powerful argument to the bonzes in comparing Christianity unfavourably with Buddhism; nor are they slow to avail themselves of so formidable a weapon.

An anti-Catholic press is quite a new element of difficulty to cope with:—

The great means (writes M. Ligneul), the principal means, employed by the sectaries and by enemies of all kinds and all shades against the propagation of Christianity is the press. The press is nowadays, at least as much as in Europe, the real power. Everbody reads, and each one, especially since the establishment of constitutional government, pretends more than ever before to judge of everything for himself.*

But there is a factor in the life and development of the Japanese nation deeper than any of those yet referred to, and which in the long run threatens to be more dangerous to the Church than any other. This is the ever-growing spirit of materialism and indifferentism, lamented by almost every one of the missioners.

Our readers will scarce need to be reminded of the extraordinary and probably unprecedented change which has come over the political and social life of Japan during the reign of the present Mikado. That change can best be expressed as the "Europeanisation" of Japan. Western civilisation has been taken over *en bloc*, and, without any transition, the quaint Japan of the Shoguns and the daimyos, with their strange costumes, grotesque armour, and half-barbarous system of feudal aristocracy, has been transformed into a modern constitutional kingdom, with its Houses of Parliament and responsible Ministry, its latest Parisian or London fashions, its railways, telegraphs, bicycles, machinery, universities, learned societies, newspapers, and all the other paraphernalia of our so-called "civilisation." The present war has shown how in the matter of armaments and

* *Compte Rendu*, 194, p. 38.

military organisation, in ironclads, torpedo-boats, and the whole equipment of army and navy, Japan can well-nigh claim to rank among the Great Powers of the day. Unfortunately this civilisation thus suddenly thrust upon the Japanese people is of a purely materialistic nature. As is the case in India, European education, the spirit of "corrosive criticism," has shattered the beliefs of the ancient religions of the country, whose puerilities and superstitions have become only too apparent to more enlightened minds, and have substituted no form of religious belief in their place. The result is a blank scepticism, a purely negative rationalism.

But we have said enough to convince our readers of the great dangers which threaten the future of the Church in Japan, all the more alarming, because far more subtle and insidious, than all the ferocious cruelties of Hideyoshi and Ieyasu, and their successors. The devoted pastors of the Church are, thank God, fully alive to the signs of the times, as their own words prove. Dark as the outlook may be in many respects, terrible as is the struggle before them—for they may truly say, "our wrestling is not with flesh and blood," but with the spirit of worldliness and infidelity—we still feel encouraged to hopes of ultimate triumph. All the roseate expectations of 1865, and still more of 1891, are probably not to be realised so soon; but it seems almost a want of faith to doubt that the prayers and groans of St. Francis Xavier, and the blood of so many martyrs, known and unknown, poured forth like water during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, will, in God's own good time bear a glorious harvest in the century that is now beginning.

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